Famous Artists Course

Famous Artists Schools, Inc., Westport, Connecticut

Advertising and editorial design and layout

Lesson 19

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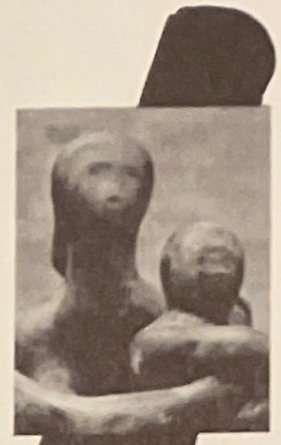
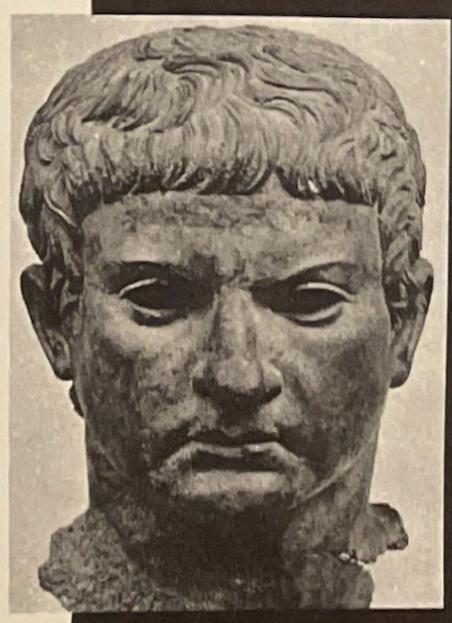




Picture credits: (Top) Picasso: Girl before a Mirror, Museum of Modern Art, collection of Mrs. Simon Guggenheim; (*upper left, second picture*) Paul Klee: Mask of Fear, collection of Dr. and Mrs. Allen Roos, San Francisco, California; (*upper right*) Henry Moore: Family Group, Bronze (cast 1950), Museum of Modern Art.

Advertising and editorial design and layout – Giusti (George Giusti)

The purpose of any advertisement is to convey a message – one that makes the viewer want to buy the client's product or service.

This message is not just the obvious statement written in the headline and copy. It is the total meaning of all parts of the ad – the words of the text, what the design or illustration itself says or means to the viewer, and the planned impact of the layout's arrangement of all the elements in the ad.

It is not enough that the design be handsome or decorative. It must convey, clearly, the dominant idea of the advertiser's message. For example, a design that features a sleeping kitten might be used to symbolize the riding comfort of a railroad coach, while a penguin suggests the coolness of a cigarette.

This relationship between message, art and design must hold true no matter what the ad is used for – whether it appears in a national magazine with millions of readers or is a poster for the local church fair. If the basic idea is well conceived the design can be both beautiful and effective, rewarding in every sense to the designer and to the people who receive his message.

And this is a most important point. Your Faculty and hundreds of art directors all over the country have learned from experience that most beginning designers just don't take the time to ask themselves the most vital question of all from the very start of their planning: Will my design get the client's basic idea across to the viewer quickly and convincingly – reflecting the true character of the product or services the advertiser wants to tell his audience about?

All successful professionals realize that their design and layout must answer this question with a loud, clear "Yes!" Any confusion or inappropriateness in a design, anything that does not help to make this major point, should be eliminated no matter how original or interesting it may be in itself – no matter how much personal appeal it may have for the artist himself.

In the preceding lesson you learned that there are countless intriguing techniques, materials and effects at your disposal – we hope you've tried many of them and will continue experimenting. But we must remind you again that techniques and materials are only tools to express your idea. Don't become so fascinated by techniques that you fool yourself into believing they can replace thinking a design through – they never can!

To demonstrate how the design idea must link directly with the advertiser's message, let's say a manufacturer wants to run an ad in a steel-industry magazine, pointing out that his firm makes the hardest steel for fine precision tools. With this as the theme it's logical to start off by thinking of something as hard as steel – or harder. This something could then symbolize the super-hardness of his kind of steel. Perhaps a diamond is the answer, because – as the readers of this trade magazine know – very tough steel is cut by saws tipped with tiny diamond points. So the relationship will be clear to the viewers of this ad.

Having selected the diamond, other questions come to mind. Does a diamond have a sufficiently interesting shape? Certainly – if the facets are well handled this could be a very striking design. The cut diamond is also geometric enough in form to suggest precision and to convey an appropriate industrial feeling.

Let's take another problem – let's say an advertiser wants to sell the idea that his transportation or distribution system is the fastest and most convenient. Rather than show trucks, planes or trains in a literal way, proceeding from one point to another, we might conceivably show an outstretched hand with the major cities in the country within its grasp, or perhaps the hand would cover a map-like shape of the world, the country, or the area in which the advertiser operates.

If a third advertiser has a product whose form is unique, then perhaps the designer can take that shape, emphasize its characteristics, strip it down to its barest essentials – in effect, exaggerate the form or texture in a way that makes the product both attractive and easy to recognize. Then this motif can be used in the ad. For example, a cable manufacturer's ad would be unusual and effective if the spiral winding of the wires became a major design element. The entire background of the ad could even be made up of a repeated spiral pattern that said "cable" with clarity and impact.

Once you've decided on the general theme or subject that is clearly appropriate, make a number of small thumbnail sketches. Keep these simple. Use them to try out various designs and arrangements of the layout elements. Some you'll discard; others will seem more promising. Work with these, improving and developing them. Finally you'll find the one that best answers your all-important question: Do I communicate the basic message quickly, accurately and convincingly? Only then are you ready to begin your final design and layout.

In your search for the right idea there will always be many possible solutions. Consider the Tree of Artistic Life on the opposite page. It is not intended to suggest that the Picasso head at the top is the answer to everything. On the contrary – the classic head at the foot of the tree might be just as good an inspiration for a particular design. These illustrations show eight of the countless different ways to handle one subject – all of them equally valid. They are intended to remind you that you have a wide range of possible solutions to any design problem. Make sure that the design you select expresses the idea clearly and appropriately.

Once you've chosen your theme, execute it with all your skill. In this lesson you will study many aspects of designing which will help you to develop ideas into successful layouts.

You will examine the psychology of the direct approach. Understanding the use of symbols can help the designer enormously in the creation of trademarks, letterheads – designs of all sorts. A feeling for an unusual layout, rather than a conventional one, can determine the success of a basically good advertising or editorial idea. The ability to use type with imagination and taste is also of prime importance to the designer.

All these skills, demonstrated in this lesson, will help you – the artist – to fulfill your ideas. But the main thing to remember is that it is through creative thinking, experiment and sound development that your idea will achieve its fullest value.

Case history of a design

The Container Corporation of America wants us to design a full-color magazine page. It is to be used as an institutional campaign advertisement in a series called "Great Ideas of Western Man." Now an institutional ad doesn't try to sell a product or service directly – rather, it seeks to gain prestige for the company by associating its name with a worthwhile cause or a highly inspirational or educational idea.

The client wants this ad to illustrate the humanitarian philosophy of Jane Addams, the famous American pioneer in social work. They wish to feature a quotation from her writings: "Civilization is a method of living, an attitude of respect for all men." They wish this message to appear in the ad with their firm name and trademark, but have no other specific suggestions.

We are familiar with the "Great Ideas" campaign and know that whatever we do has to fit into the general character of the other ads of this distinguished series. As you can see from the examples on this page, there is no rigid pattern the artist must follow. There is almost complete freedom – the client insists only that the work be unique, original, and in the best taste.

To decide on the all-important theme of this message the first thing is to find out more about Jane Addams, her personality and her work. This calls for research in the public library, which discloses many interesting and memorable things about her.

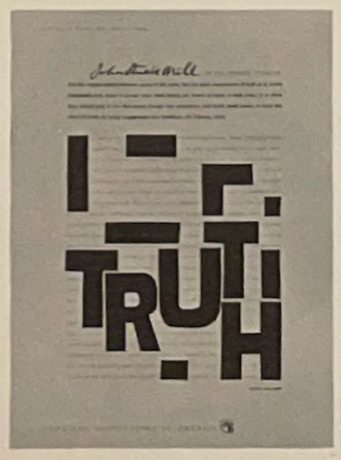
She had founded Hull House, a community center in Chicago where she became famous for her social work with the underprivileged foreign-born, the slum children, and the 1889 equivalent of juvenile delinquency and its problems. This is a fascinating story but it doesn't suggest a picture – a visual symbol of her work. She was also a leader in the fight for women's suffrage – an interesting campaign but no longer timely enough to be a meaningful theme.

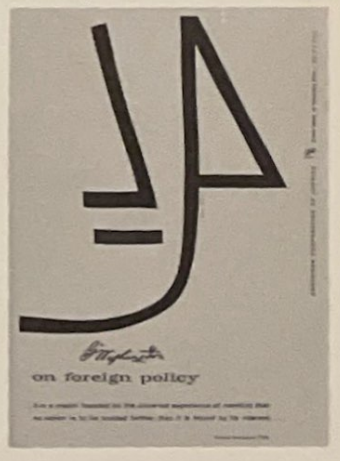
We also learn that Jane Addams won the Nobel Peace Prize. Now the main idea for the advertisement begins to take shape! All her life Jane Addams fought valiantly for peace, against the prejudices aimed at the different races and creeds that make up America. She believed in the brotherhood of man – in equality for all, regardless of race, creed or color of skin.

How to symbolize the strength that could come from the harmonious unity of the four races – red, yellow, white and black? What would make a convincing and arresting design to communicate the idea of brotherhood?

On the following pages you can examine several of the approaches to this problem and see the gradual evolution of this design to its successful conclusion.

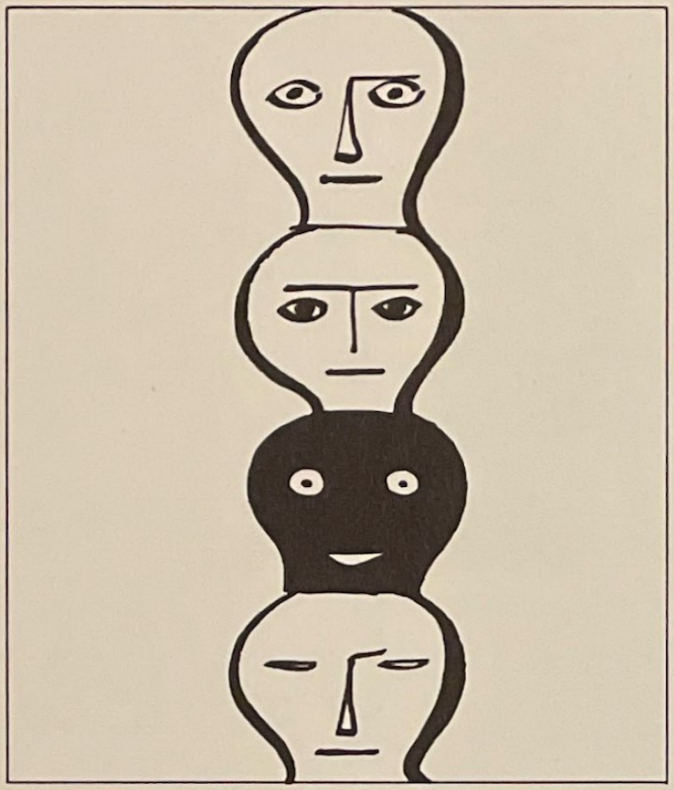
Advertisements by Container Corp. of America





Some examples of the "Great Ideas of Western Man" series — illustrating the varied approaches used by different artists.

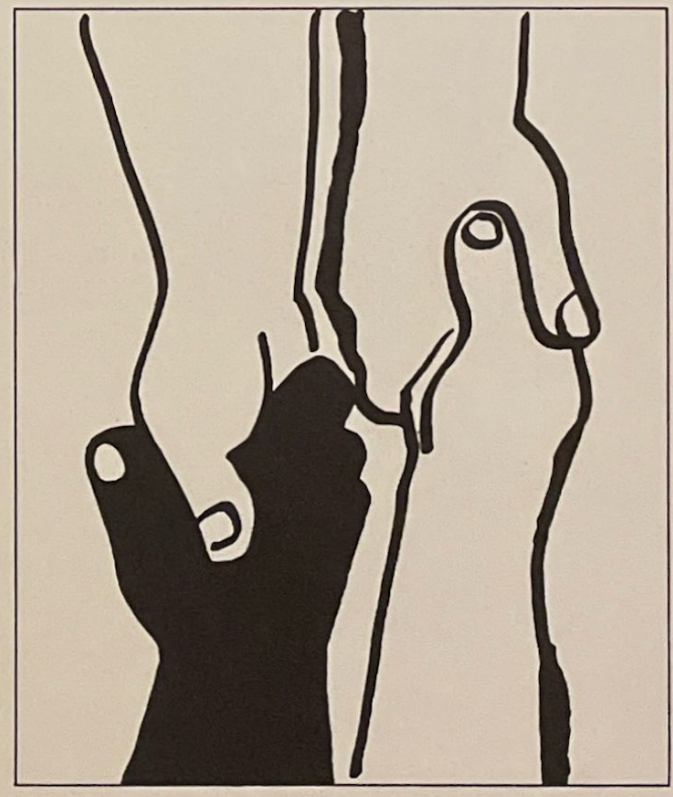
The first thumbnail sketches — thinking on paper



1 At first we consider four heads, using a different color for each race. This looks promising, but the vertical layout is really too inactive: it lacks a dynamic quality the design has to carry. It doesn't state its message forcefully enough. There might also be some criticism of the faces themselves: not attractive enough, too stylized, or perhaps too playful.

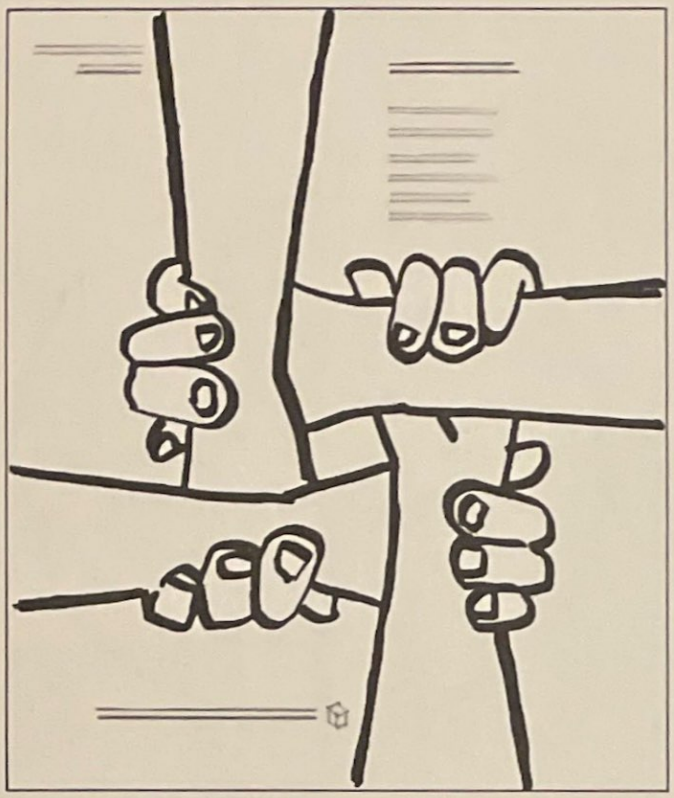
2 Next we try this centered layout and consider placing the four profiles within a circle that symbolizes the world. This is more decorative but it is also static — it doesn't express unity and strength. At this point we decide to drop the idea of faces entirely and try a new approach, using full figures — perhaps these will communicate our message better.

3 This is a more interesting design, four men with hands joined, but like the others it doesn't really carry conviction — it isn't dynamic enough. And it might also be called "cartoonish." Still, to create impact the figures have to be stylized and handled in a contemporary way. We decide against these figures but feel an idea exists in the joined hands.

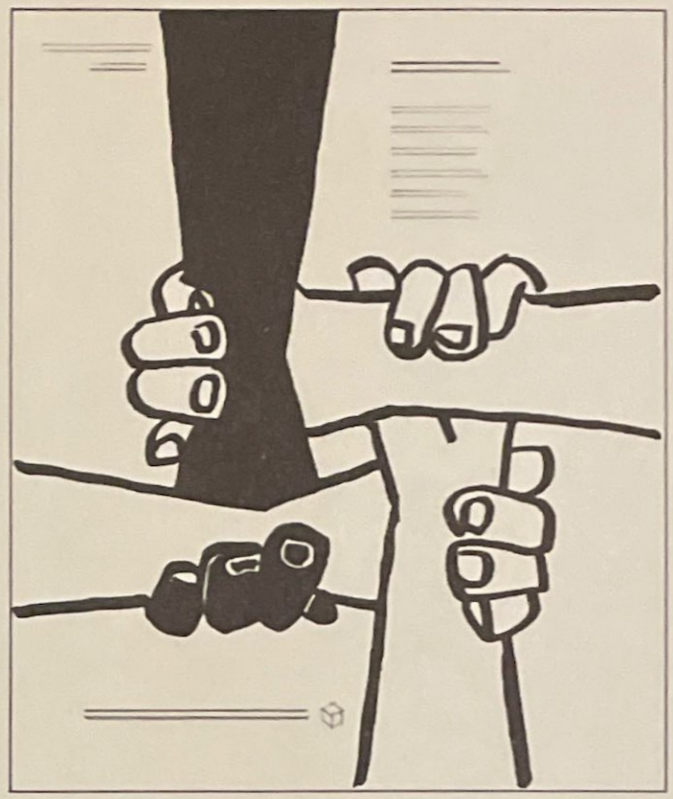


4 The idea of joined hands (the symbol of friendship) begins to take shape. But this sketch is unsatisfactory because there seems to be a vertical push-and-pull feeling in it — just the opposite of what is wanted, which is unity. Maybe another view or different positions of the clasped hands would work. We try more approaches.

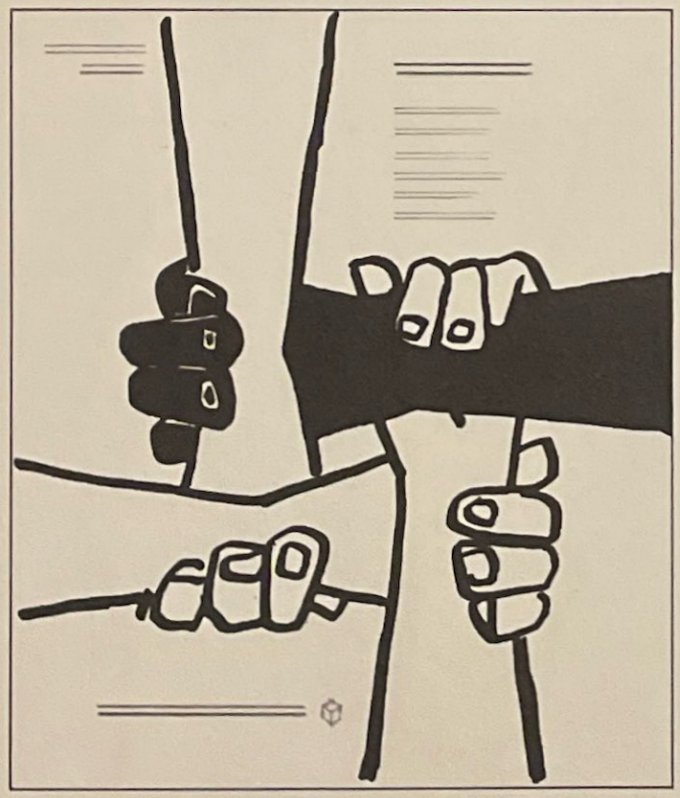
This is it



5 As soon as we sketch this we know we're on the right track. The hands are now forming a strong bond. The basic layout here is a combination of horizontal and vertical elements. Another good point is that this design permits an interesting placement of the copy in the layout.



6 The next problem to solve is the position of the black arm and hand, as that's the one that will contrast most with the other colors and background. At first we try it at the top, but this creates a top-heavy effect.



7 The horizontal arrangement eliminates the top-heaviness but now the black arm coming in from the right seems to cut the design in half.

8 Now we have the right place for the black shape. It's more effective here because it seems to support the design, acting as a base or pedestal.

9 On the opposite page is the advertisement as it appeared in the magazines. Before doing it we make a rough color sketch about the same size as the finished art, to determine the textures and colors — the right over-all techniques. For the red arm we use a red dye; for the black arm, India ink and colored dyes. That leaves the problem of making the gray-white arm and the yellow arm stand out against the light background. To be sure they won't be lost we paint them with thick tempera and create a coarse texture that separates them from the smooth white background.

Notice too that the black not only supports the design itself, but also adds strength and brilliance to the other colors.

Advertisement by Container Corp. of America from the series "Great Ideas of Western Man"

Great ideas of Western Man

. . ONE OF A SERIES

Jane Addams

on the basis of civilization

Civilization
is a method
of living,
an attitude
of equal
respect
for all men.

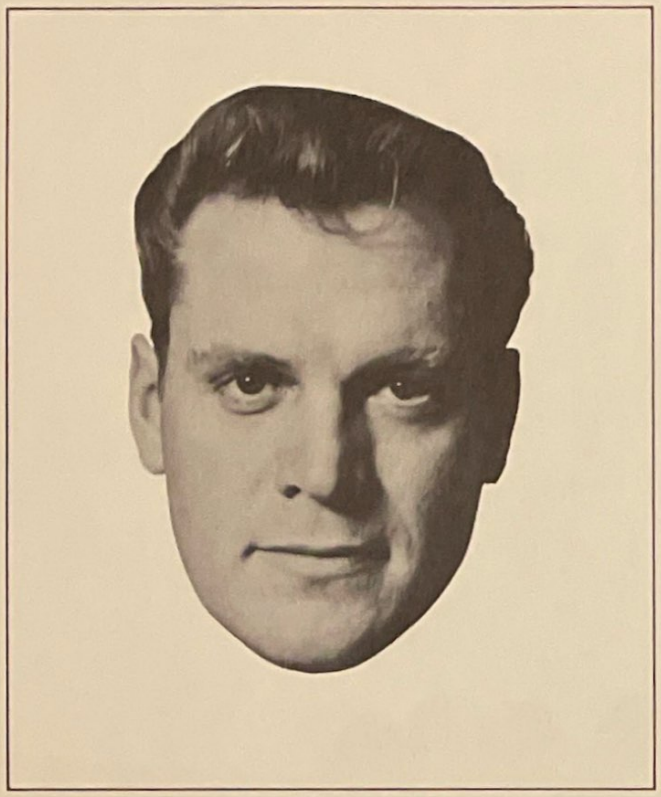
(Speech, Honolulu, 1933)

Container Corporation of America

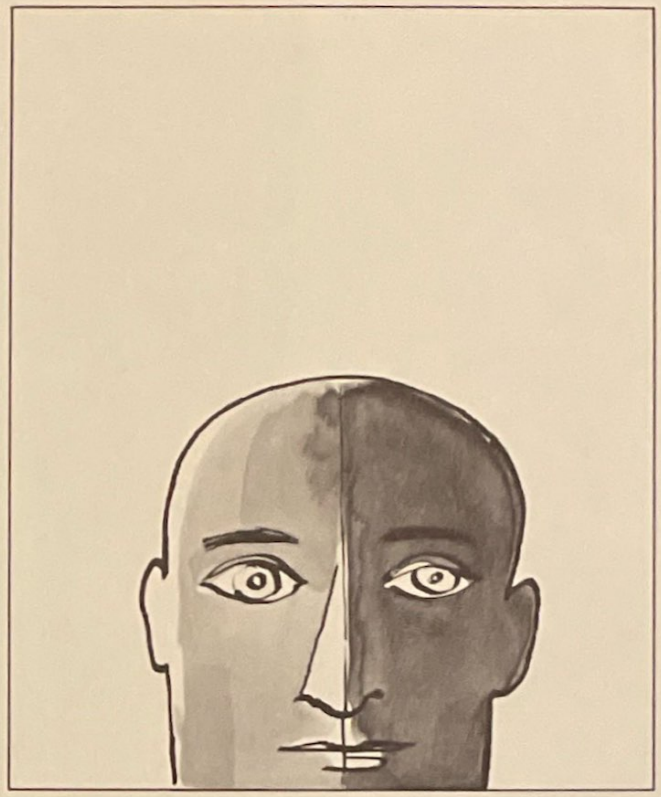
Artist: George Giusti

Reducing a head to a design

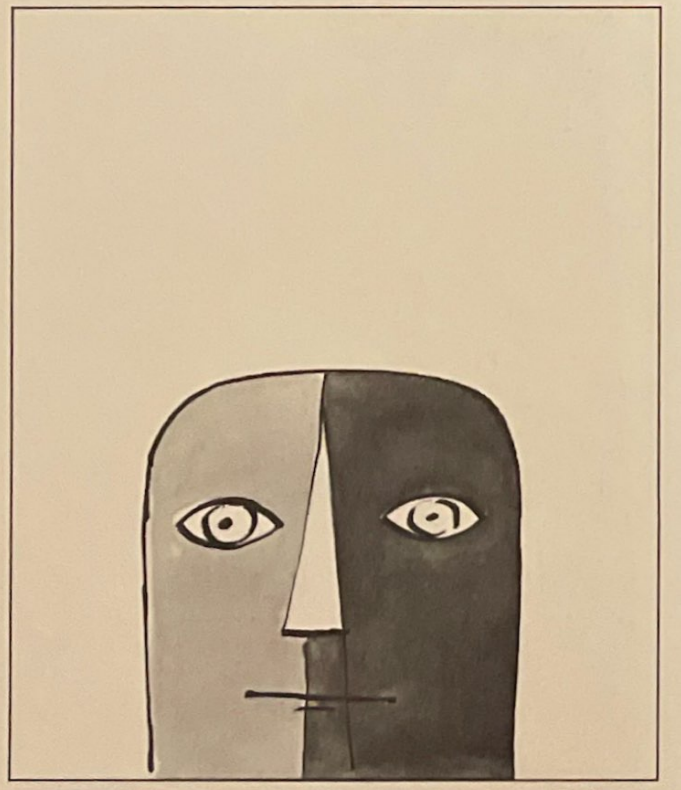
This demonstration shows how to create an attention-getting ad by starting with a completely real form and making changes, simplifications and even distortions as you reduce it to an effective and amusing design.



1 Here is an actual human head to start from, but all we want from it are the essentials that will make a design with strong impact.

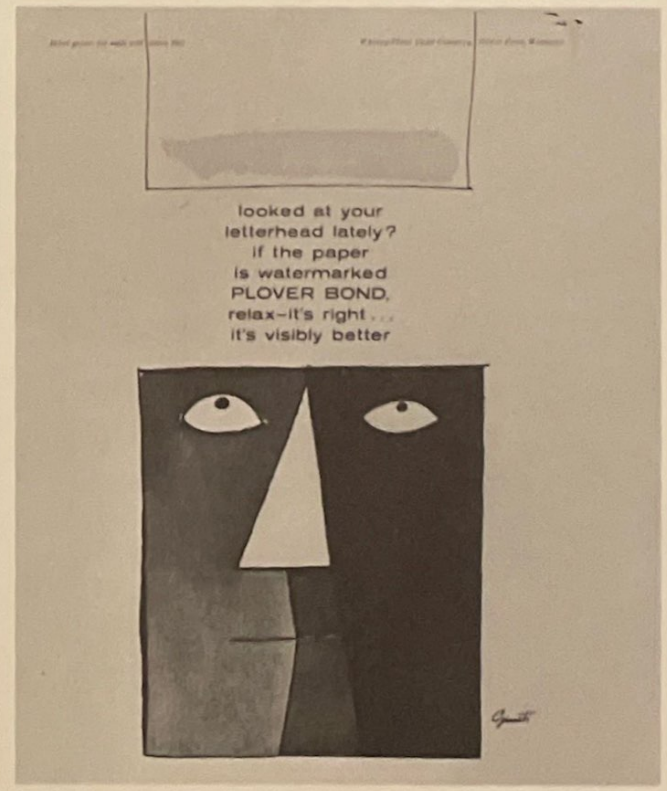


2 The very first step is to depart radically from the real head. The hair is eliminated; so are the subtle tones and details of the features. The obvious pattern of light and shadow on the head is good — it can play an important part in the design.



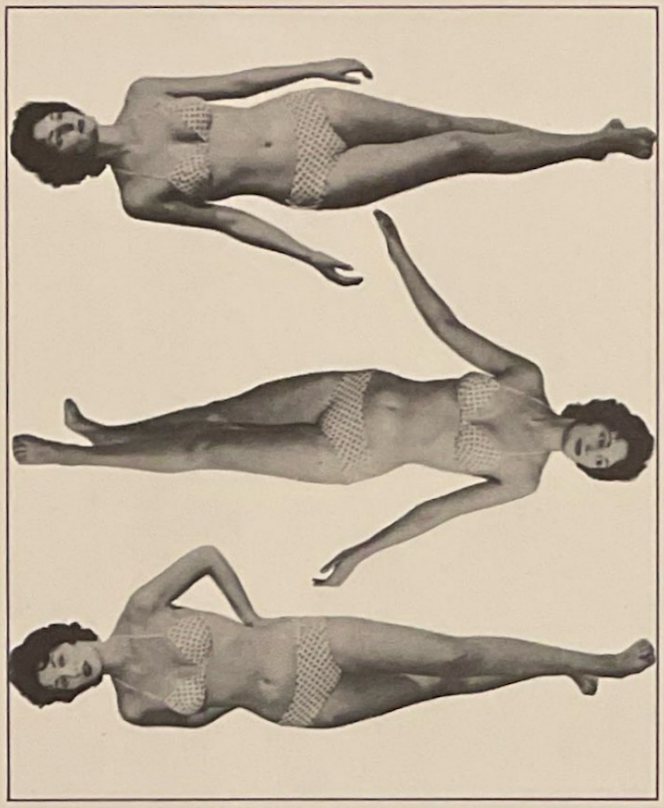
3 It's interesting to note that without the ears the head actually hits our eye faster and with more impact. The strange squarer head is also more eye-catching than the normal shape. This clearly shows the strength of a simple outline and shape. The pattern of light and shadow is further strengthened. The features are simplified still more.

Courtesy Whiting-Plover Paper Co.

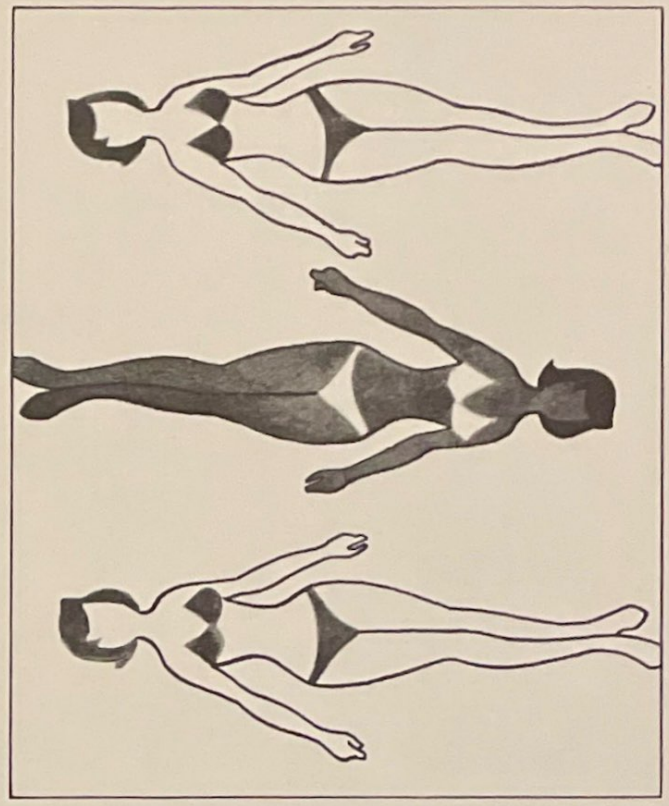


4 This final design shows you the impact of simplicity. The head is now a rectangle with squared corners. The shadow side is completely black. Not only does the design have striking effect and attention-getting value but it has a touch of whimsy in the upturned eyes and the expression of the mouth. Try some simplifications like this one yourself.

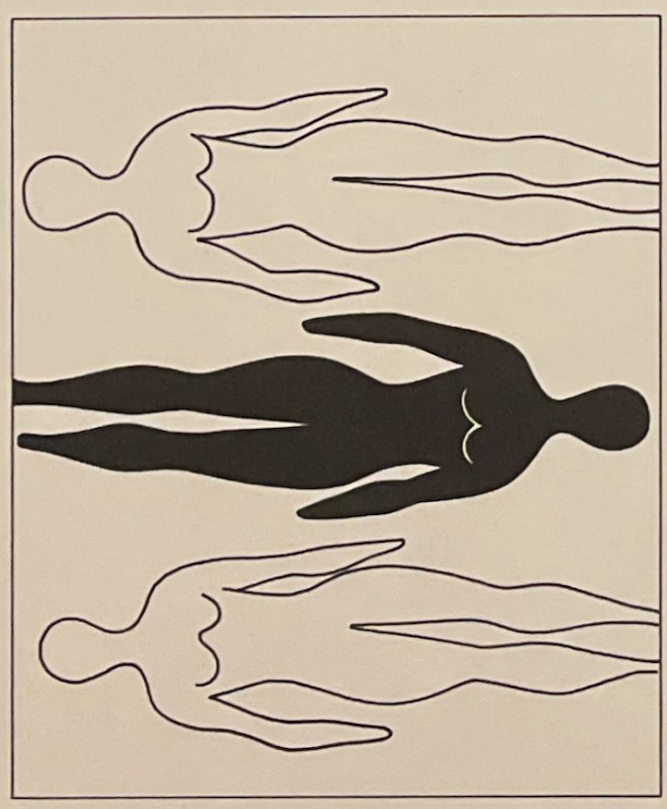
Stylizing the figure



1 Here the assignment is to create a design for the jacket of a book titled *Three Lives*. The starting point might be these three photographs. However, these figures are far too specific to function as symbols for the lives of the women in the story. They seem to be only "three pictures of a girl in a bathing suit." The net result is literal, prosaic and unsuitable.

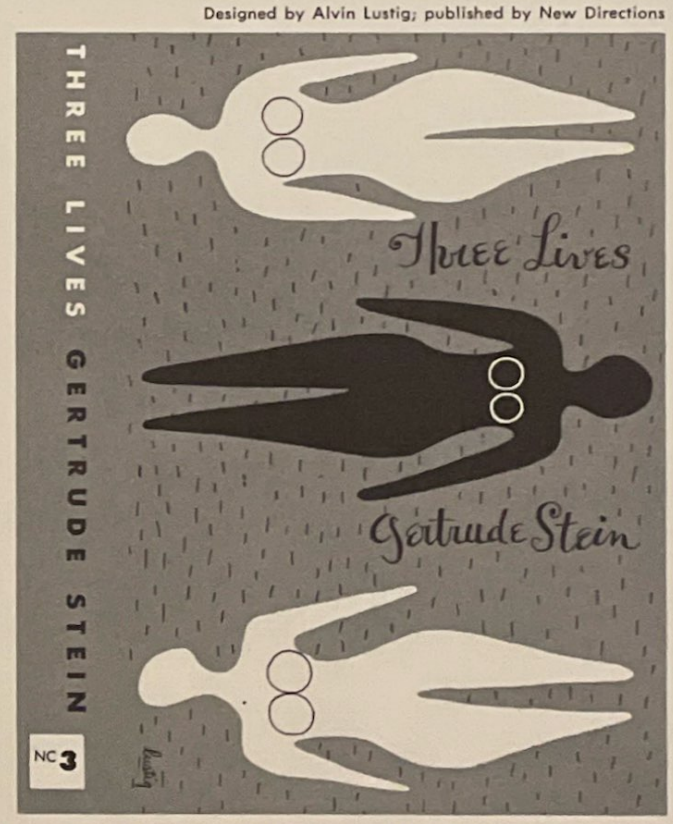


2 The three different poses in the photo seemed distracting, so this design repeats one pose for all three figures. The center figure is darkened because one of the three girls in the story is a Negro. This alternation of dark and light adds interest to the design but the effect is still too realistic. Some serious changes will have to be made in these figures.

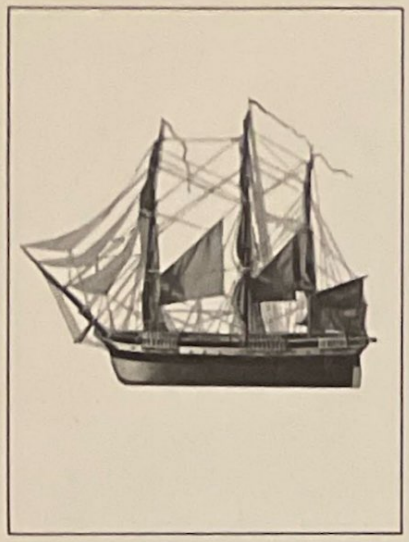


3 See how greatly the design gains in strength as soon as the figures are radically changed — made simpler. At this point the figures no longer appear as detailed individual forms: the three together make a pattern of light and dark shapes that create an over-all design for the jacket. This is the desired effect. They have become symbols of women.

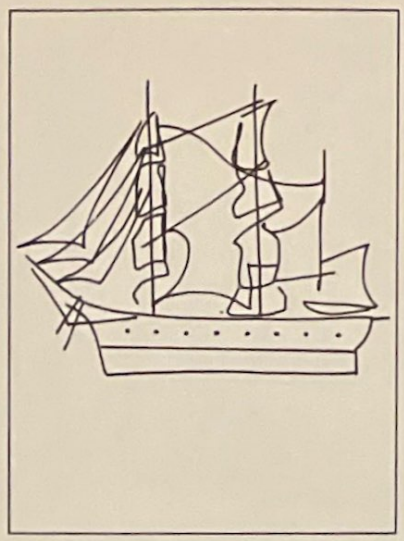
Designed by Alvin Lustig; published by New Directions



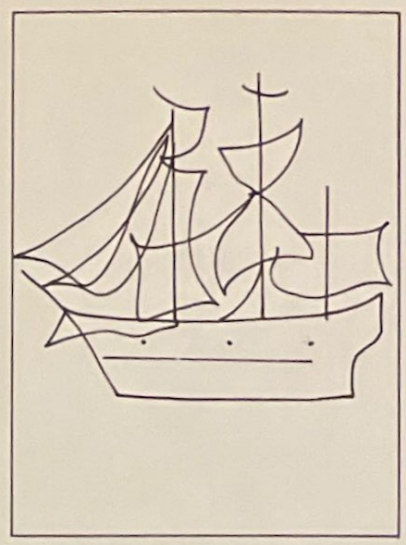
4 In the preceding stage the forms were reduced to flat shapes, but the outlines were still realistic. Here, in the finished jacket, these contours are still further simplified — about as much as they can be without making the shapes unrecognizable as figures. The short pen strokes create an over-all texture for the background and help to unify the design.



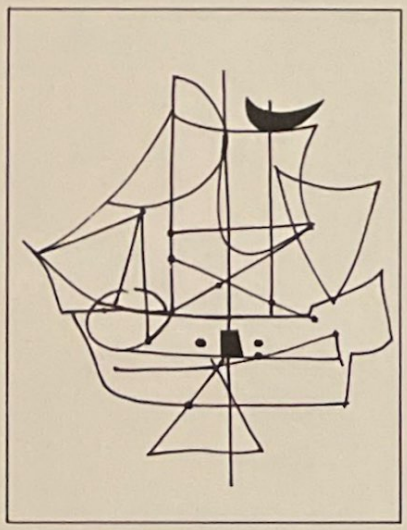
1 Our first step is to take a good look at a sailing ship and see what its characteristics are. Here's what we start from: a photograph of a ship model. The main features of the hull, masts and sails will form the basis of our design.



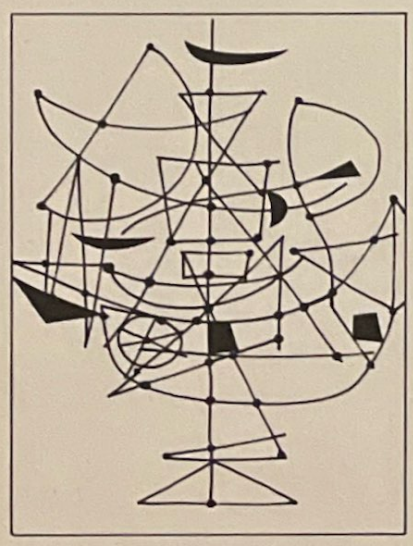
2 Here, in our first working drawing, we begin to eliminate all confusing elements and everything not really essential to the character of the vessel. With free pen lines we explore the possibilities — try to "feel" the general outline of the shapes of the ship.



3 Here it is simplified still further. Now we depart quite freely from the photo, but the three essentials — masts, hull and sails — are still there. The design is opened up, handled more loosely and made slightly larger.



4 Now we make a radical change in the proportions of the ship to fit the shape of the cover better. The hull is made shorter, the masts taller. The lines of masts, sails, and hull are drawn much more firmly and we're more decisive about their placement. We try out a couple of small black shapes to contrast with the many thin lines.

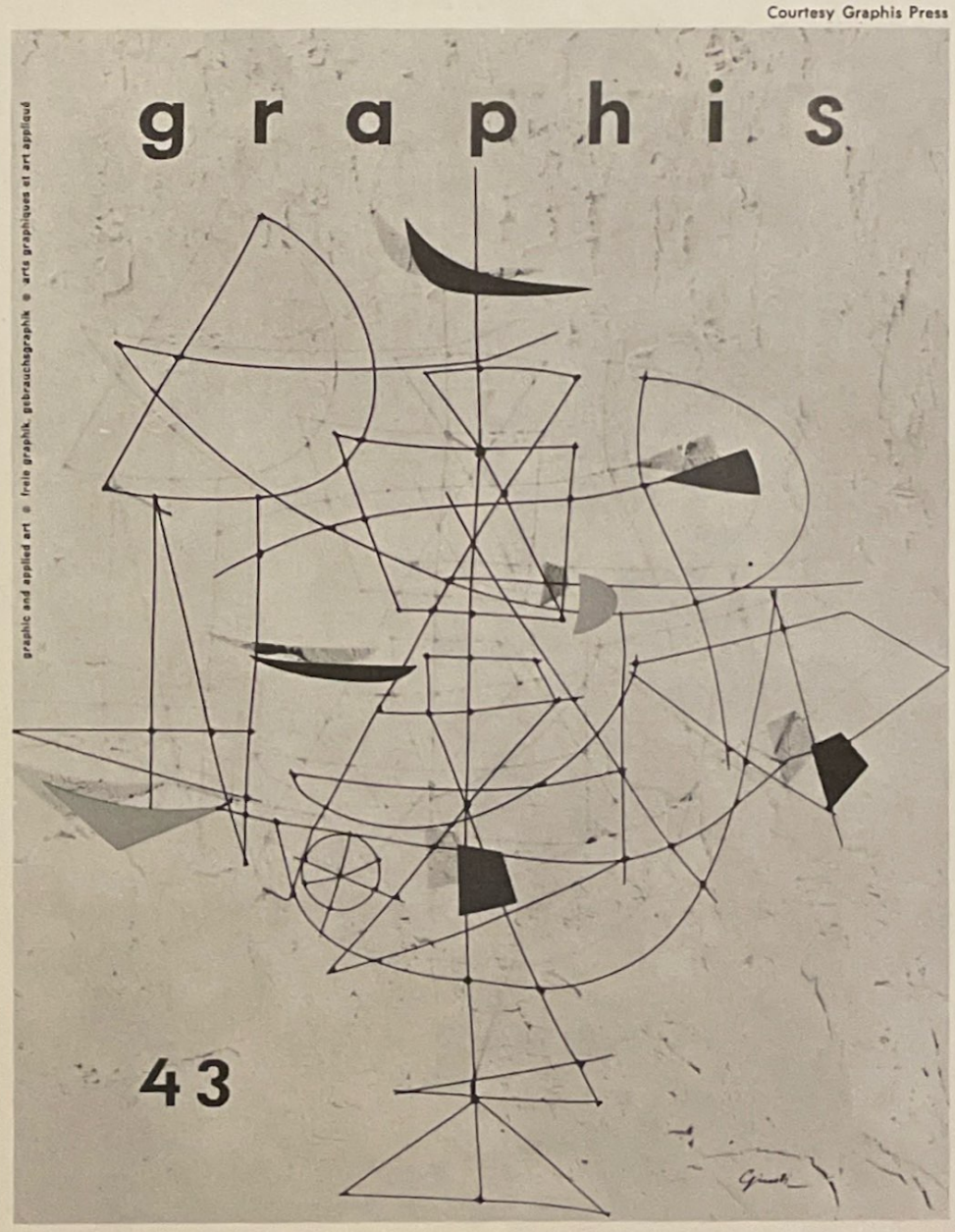


5 This is almost the finished version. More dark shapes add interest and variety to the dominant pattern of lines. We also draw in the soldered joints to see what effect they have. To abstract it any further would make the subject unrecognizable. This is as far as we carry the drawing — now we're ready to use it as a guide for the finished design in wire.

Transforming a ship into a symbol

This assignment calls for the design of a contemporary magazine cover. No subject is specified, so we decide to make a modern interpretation of a ship – not a realistic ship but a symbol that will be original, decorative, unique in its appearance and its use of materials. We plan to execute the final design in pieces of thin copper wire soldered together and placed against a rough-textured background.

Courtesy Graphis Press



6 The final design is executed with thin copper wire soldered together and attached to a wooden board covered with rough gesso. This surface texture contrasts effectively with the fine wire pattern. The wire and small pieces of metal were painted with black paint, giving a dull velvety finish. The final photograph shows how the shadows thrown on the background emphasize the three-dimensional nature of the work. The original photograph of the ship has now become a wire collage.

How the idea becomes a design

This series of pictures, like those of the ship, shows progressive steps in reducing a real object to its simple essentials in order to create an original design that will be thoroughly contemporary in spirit and will catch the viewer's eye.

This is also a good example of the important point emphasized on page 3 – that you must make sure your design relates to the advertiser's product.

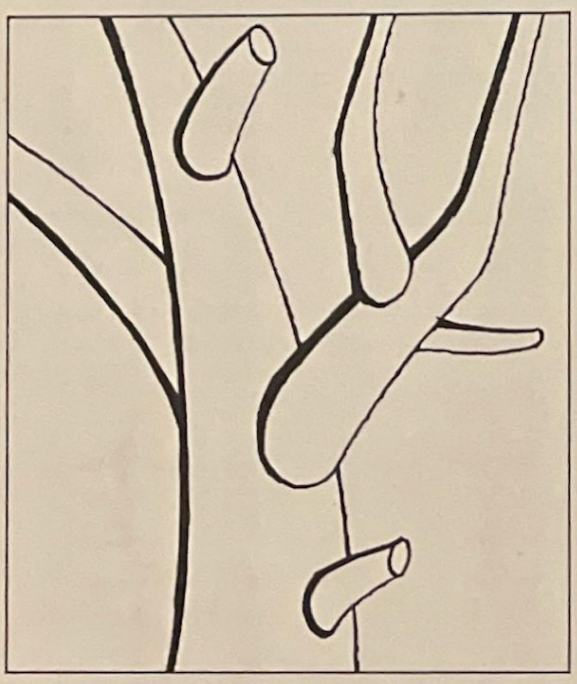
In this case the product is paper. There are many ways to show paper – a few sheets arranged to form an abstract design – a stack of paper on a desk, or on skids at a printing plant – rolls of it running through the presses. All these are valid ideas but they lack originality.

What about the source of paper? Pulp comes from wood, wood from trees. Trees! That's it. Why not a tree with its cylindrical branches and trunk made of rolled-up magazine pages? It all fits neatly together in a logical and unique design idea.

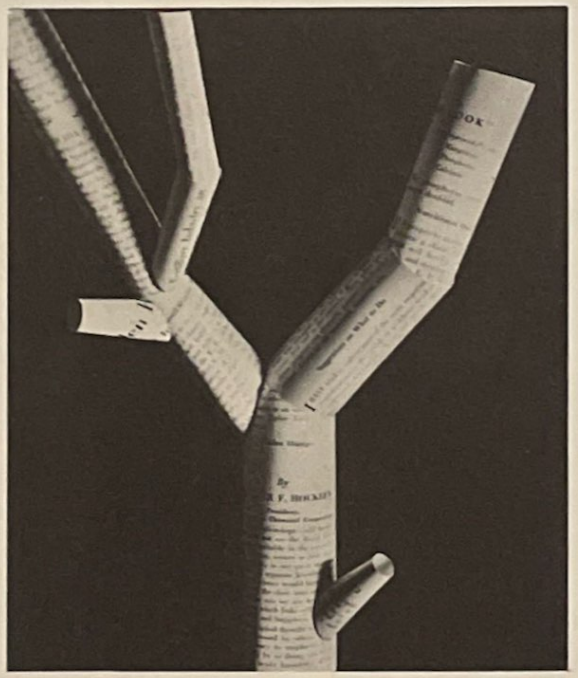
1 This photograph of the tree shows an interesting group of branch forms and shapes. We study its basic structure and look for ways to simplify it.

2 This drawing of the tree is less confusing than the photo. The background has been eliminated and some of the branches moved slightly for better design. However, it is still too realistic — too much like the photo.

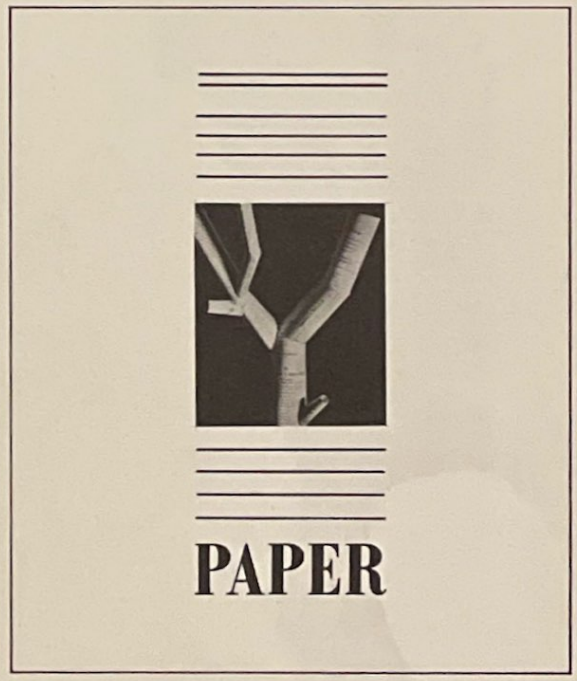
3 Here we've left out some branches and organized the others into a rhythmic, flowing pattern. The light and shadow pattern works well — but it mustn't be so conspicuous that it may detract from the print on the rolled-up pages.



4 To be sure the tonal pattern won't mislead us, we eliminate it entirely, and with this pure line drawing anticipate the final design. It simplifies the tree still further and eliminates many of the curves that could not be duplicated with rolls of paper.



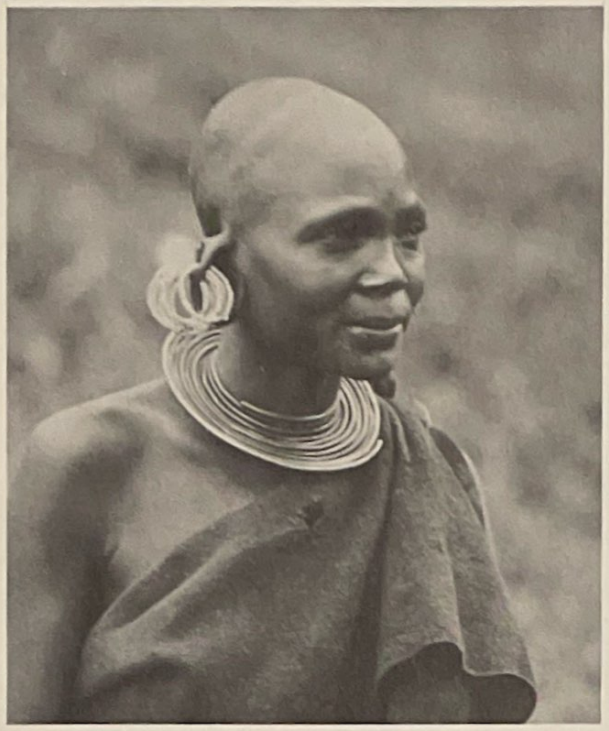
5 Here, in the paper tree, is the final design, simplified to the extreme but still retaining the basic structure. We wind up with a gay three-dimensional design which is generally similar to the preceding pictures, but more original as a design solution.



6 Here is the design as it is used in the completed layout.

The evolution of a magazine cover design

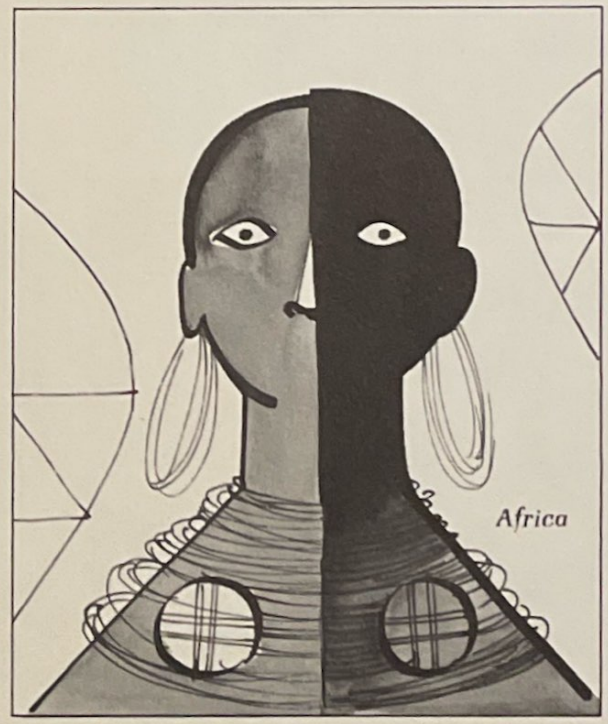
Holiday magazine wants to symbolize Africa on the cover of an issue devoted to that continent. Our first problem, as designers, is to discover an idea, a motif, that will do this directly and dramatically. During our research we come across a photograph of a Masai woman *(below)* and learn a great deal about her tribe. The Masai seem to embody the popular conception of native Africa. They are a handsome, stalwart group, holding proudly to their tribal customs. The men prove their courage by spearing lions for fun rather than making war against their neighbors. The women glory in their coiled copper necklaces that sometimes weigh thirty pounds. So this photograph seems to be a good starting point. Now the problem is to simplify it until it becomes a contemporary interpretation that will epitomize all Africa.



1 Here is the photograph of the Masai woman which furnishes the inspiration for our cover. Note the elaborate necklace, earrings, and the shaved head — all are characteristic of her tribe.

2 The first step of simplification is to turn the head directly toward the viewer for greater impact. We add the breastplates — these will take bright colors and act as accents for the skin tones.

3 At this stage we make a design decision to split the figure into two parts: the right side in shadow, the left in light. We plan to use a white background and make the necklace a prominent element in the design. The eyes, nose, and mouth are further simplified, and the sloping shoulders add grace to the figure.



4 The darker skin is strong and important. As soon as we put down these deeper tones, the figure stands out sharply against the white background. The design elements we have introduced on either side are battle shields. The larger shield balances the figure's shadow side; the smaller shield leaves room for the word "Africa."

5 This final cover shows further improvements in design and balance. There is a definite poster-like quality, and the necklace, earrings, and shields lend textural interest. All these elements are kept in pen line so they will complement the solid tone and colors on the woman. Any further abstraction would make it difficult for even the highly literate *Holiday* audience to understand the subject. Although now quite stylized and a far cry from the original photograph, this is still the woman of the Masai — strong, fearless, primitive — symbolic of Africa.

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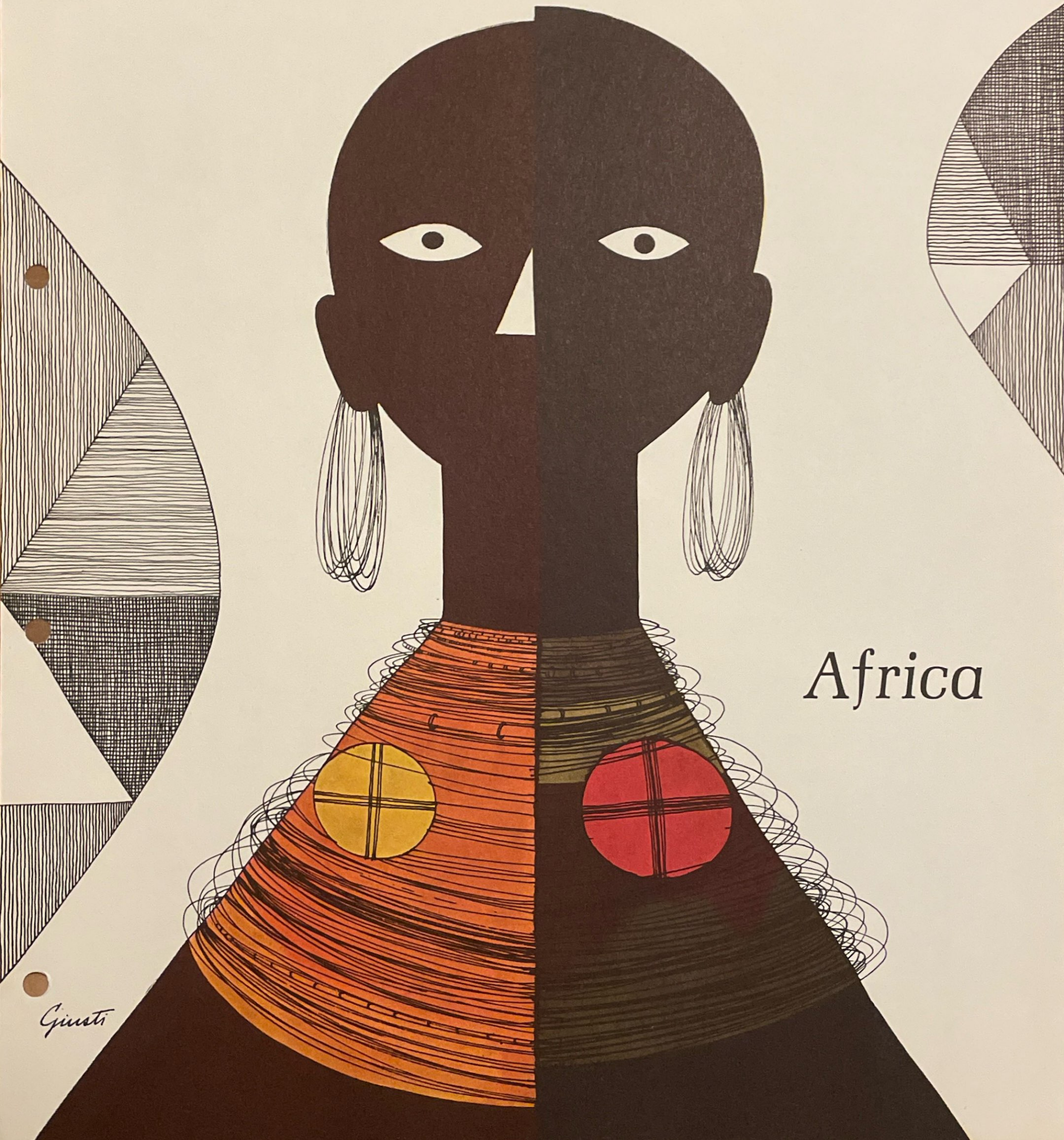
HOLIDAY

APRIL 1959 • 50c



Africa

Giusti

Lesson **19** Famous Artists Course

Advertising and editorial design and layout

Simplification in design

Our assignment here is to create a design that will be a visual symbol of the headline "Chain stores . . . shopping made easy." We will develop this design from a photograph of an actual chain-store supermarket.

A supermarket has a busy, bustling interior. During peak shopping hours the aisles may be crowded with people and shopping carts. The shelves of goods, the signs, and lighting fixtures all contribute to an essentially complicated scene.

Naturally we'll work to simplify all this so that our design will be clear and strong. At the same time we can't ignore the basic quality of complication and busyness or our design simply won't remind viewers of a supermarket. You'll see that we never lose sight of our basic idea – shopping made easy. The viewpoint is changed several times and the figures are reduced to their simplest elements as we try to make this idea clearer and sharper. Our final solution works because it expresses this idea best.

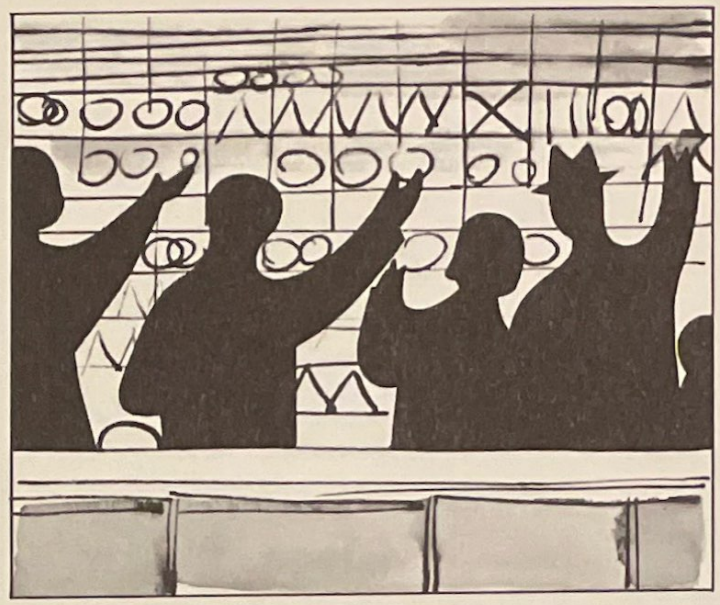
Courtesy New York Times

1 This complicated photograph of a large supermarket interior will form the basis for our design. There are many elements here, and we must eliminate and simplify greatly to get across our message of self-service with strong impact.

2 The process of simplification begins by selecting just a part of the scene and sketching from a closer point of view. To make better use of our space, the eye level is lowered and the people are brought closer together.

3 We drop the eye level still more, make the people larger and move them into the foreground. Now they are looking at products on both sides of the counter. This is better – but the message still isn't sharp and clear enough.

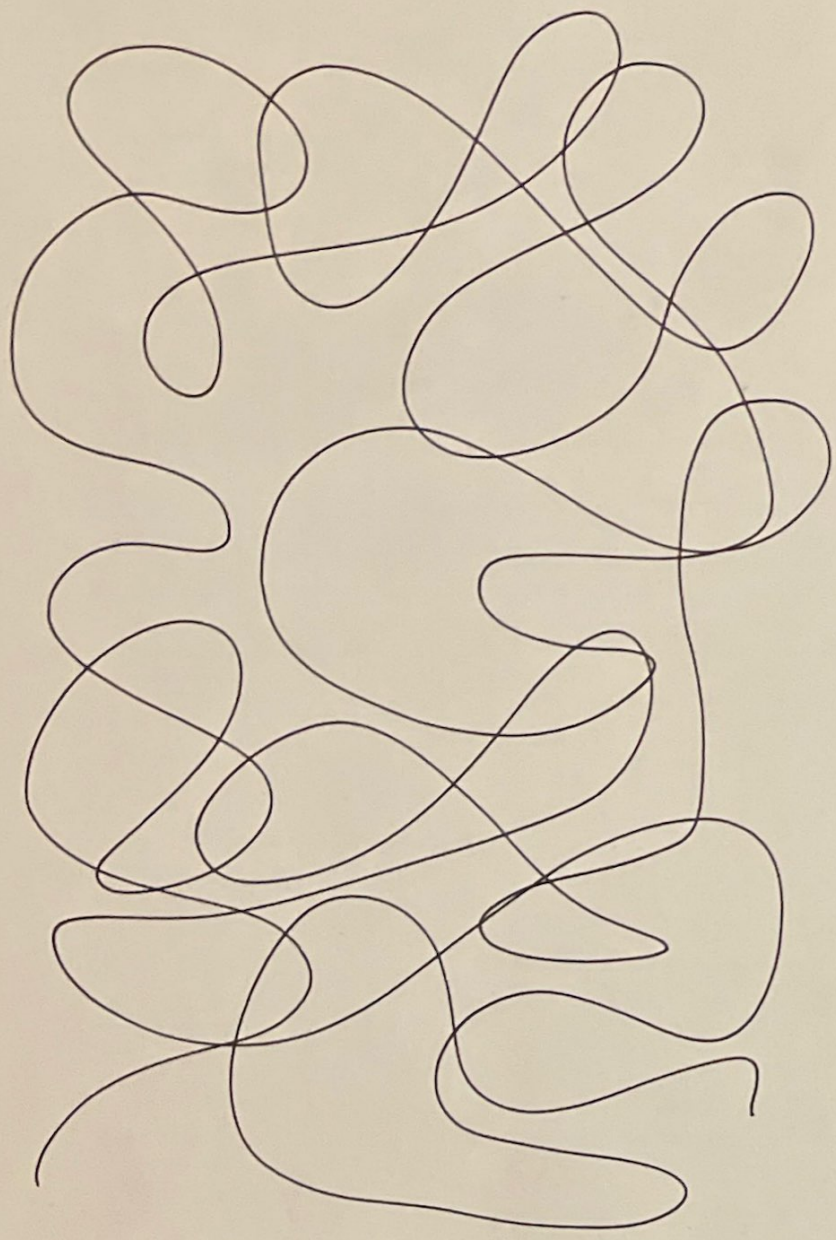
4 For greater clarity, we shift to a direct view of the horizontal rows of products on the shelves. The people are shown as silhouettes. Placing the man behind the counter is wrong — he could be a clerk, and we must emphasize the theme of self-service if we are to give our client the design he asked us for.



5 In order to project the idea of self-service better, now all the people have been moved to the other side of the counter and are reaching for products on the well-filled shelves. The figures are not individuals — we have rendered them in pure black tones so that they are simply symbols of people.

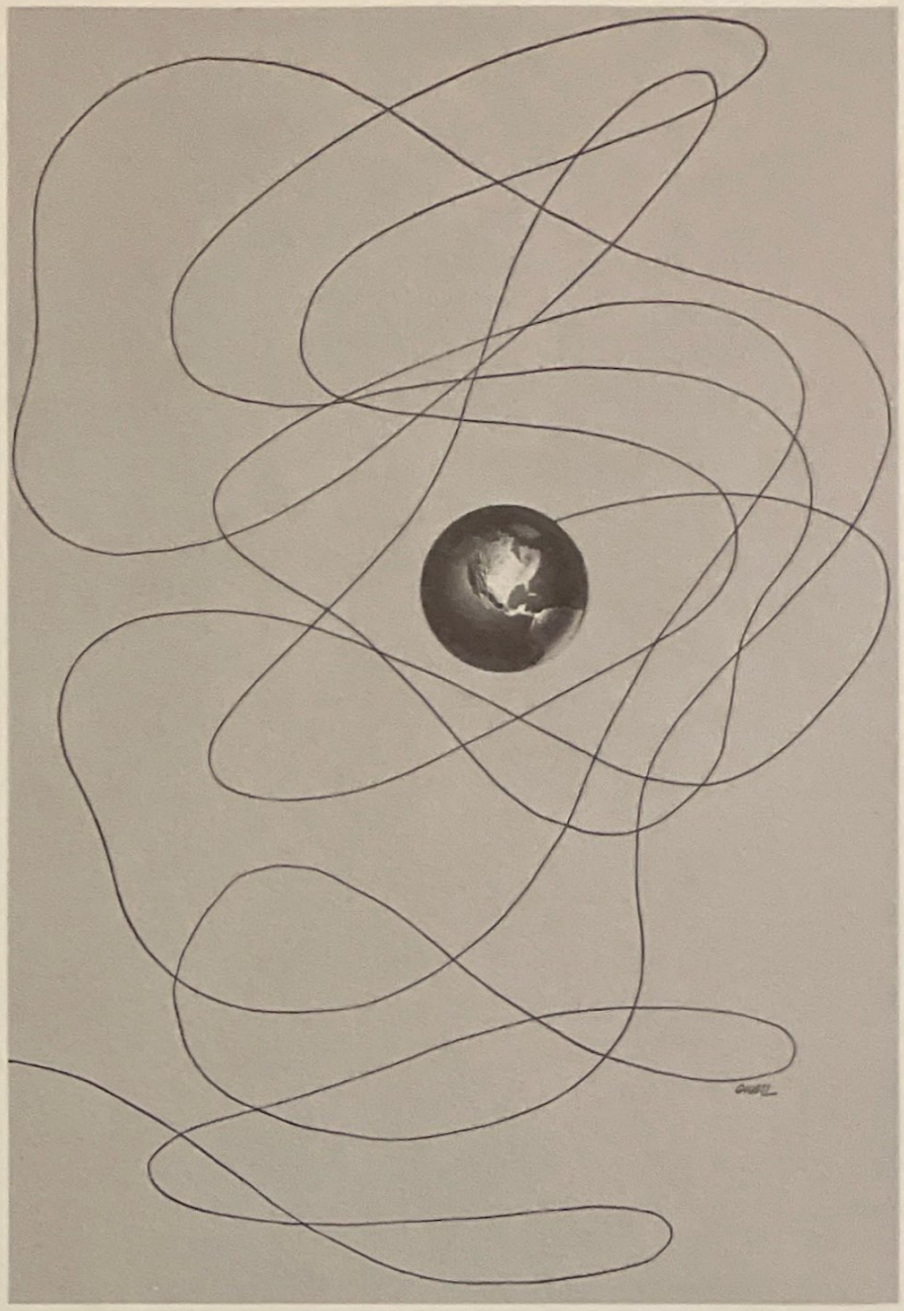
Courtesy First National City Bank of New York

6 This is the final design. In order to bring more products into view, stylized boxes and other objects are placed on the foreground counter, where they are found in most chain stores. A couple of children are added to the crowd of buyers. Note that the basic story of the photograph has not changed — it has only been translated into a simple, strong design with considerably more power and impact.

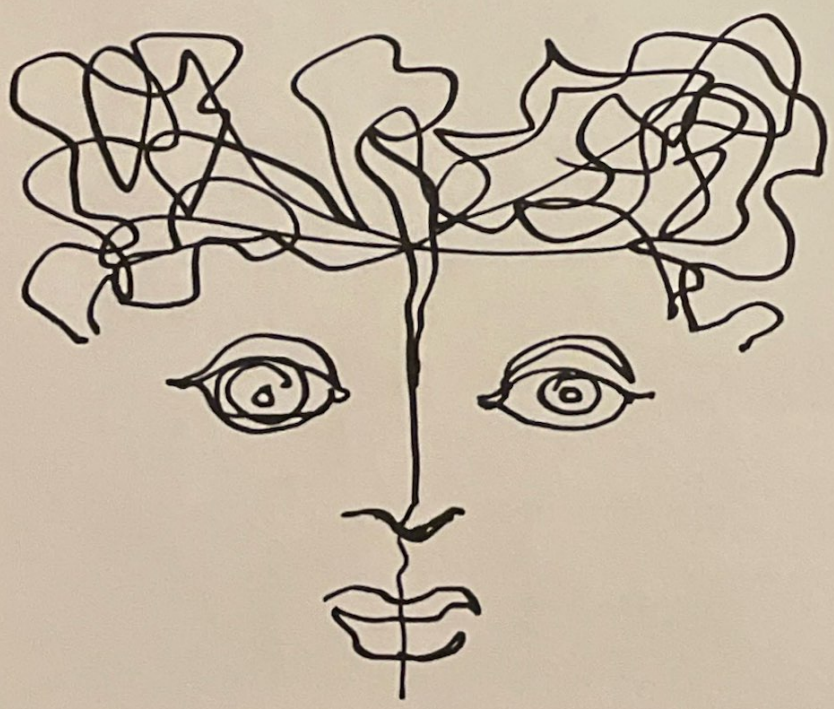


Here is what might seem to be a rather useless sort of doodle — a continuous thin pen line drawn meaninglessly around in a series of loose curves. It's a typical doodle that anyone might make during a phone conversation.

Courtesy Rough Diamond Co.



But such an apparently meaningless doodle can have value. In this design for an ad the doodle lines suggest a winding path through space that leads to the small globe of the world in the center of the design.



This drawing of a head is done in a doodling fashion, using the same type of free, casual line seen in the doodles above. The drawing is controlled, but the basic character of a loose, wandering, doodled line dominates.

Doodling

We're all familiar with the practice of doodling on memo pads or telephone books. For most people this apparently aimless scribbling is a way to relax tensions. It can be more than relaxing for you as an artist. It can help to free your imagination and may allow your subconscious to come up with a creative solution to a design problem. It rarely provides the final answer — it's more like improvising on the piano while searching for an organized melody. Still, it's another way to approach your problems freely, and no designer should ignore its value.

It is interesting to note that after the conferences of top-level government policy makers in Washington, D.C., all scratch paper is collected and destroyed for fear someone may unconsciously have revealed some important secret through his doodles. Doodling by the artist is equally revealing, but don't destroy your doodles — at least not till you've had a chance to study them for their possibilities of practical application to your design problems.

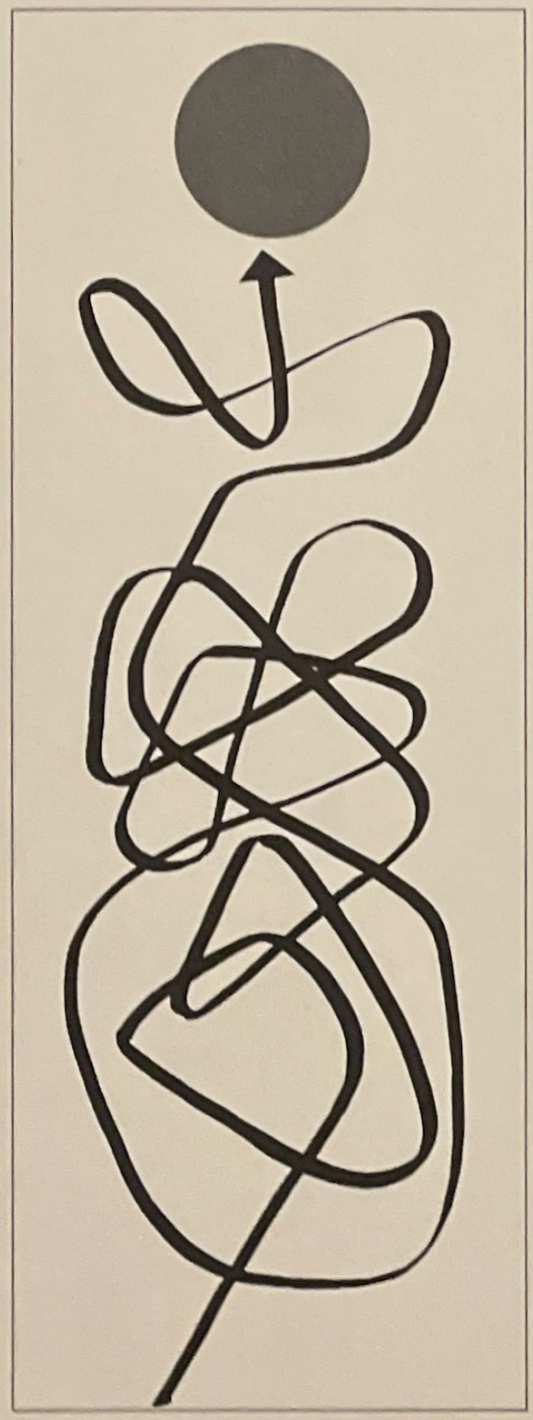
The indirect approach — and the direct approach

The diagrams below symbolize two different approaches — the direct and the indirect — which are open to the designer on almost every problem he faces. Both are valid — the important thing is to know when to use one, when the other.

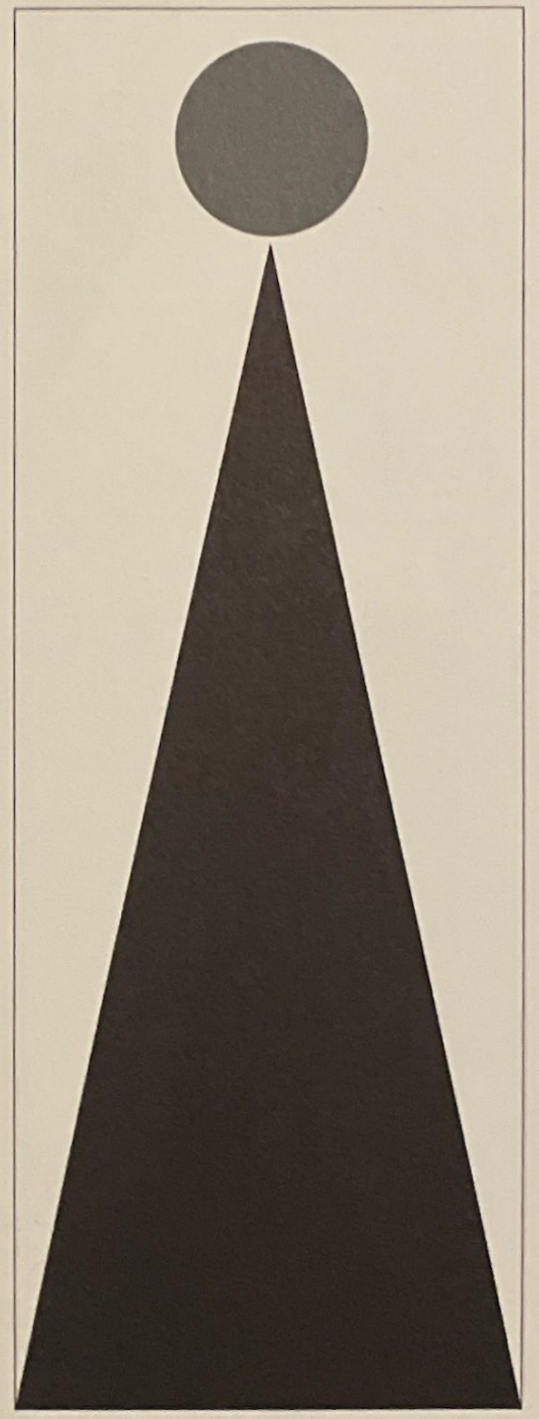
Let's first consider the indirect approach. You could say that any layout or design which includes many elements — particularly small pictures of different sizes, or blocks of text arranged in an irregular pattern — approaches the problem of communicating its message in an indirect way. To see all the elements in such a layout or to study a detailed design like this takes the viewer time — and if he has the time and the inclination, such an approach is fine. In fact, this method is often necessary if the advertiser wants to show many items, or to show a few in great detail, or feels the need of a long copy message. A magazine, booklet or catalog which can be picked up and looked at leisurely might well be handled by the indirect approach.

The direct approach serves a different purpose. Its main job is rapid communication — instant impact. It works best where attention is a prime requisite. Billboards, posters, newsstand magazine covers, displays — all these must get their message over fast. There simply isn't time for subtleties to be seen, let alone appreciated. Under these conditions details would go unnoticed, blocks of copy unread — only a direct, simple design is effective.

The direct approach is usually the more versatile of the two. It is not by any means limited to the uses we have mentioned. It can be effective in magazines or newspapers, where its simplicity and directness make it stand out sharply from its more complicated, indirect-approach competitors. Used in this fashion, it still receives the same quick reaction from the page flipper — simply because there is nothing to maintain interest after the first glance — no copy to read, no details to linger over. But the direct approach does hit hard and is easily remembered.



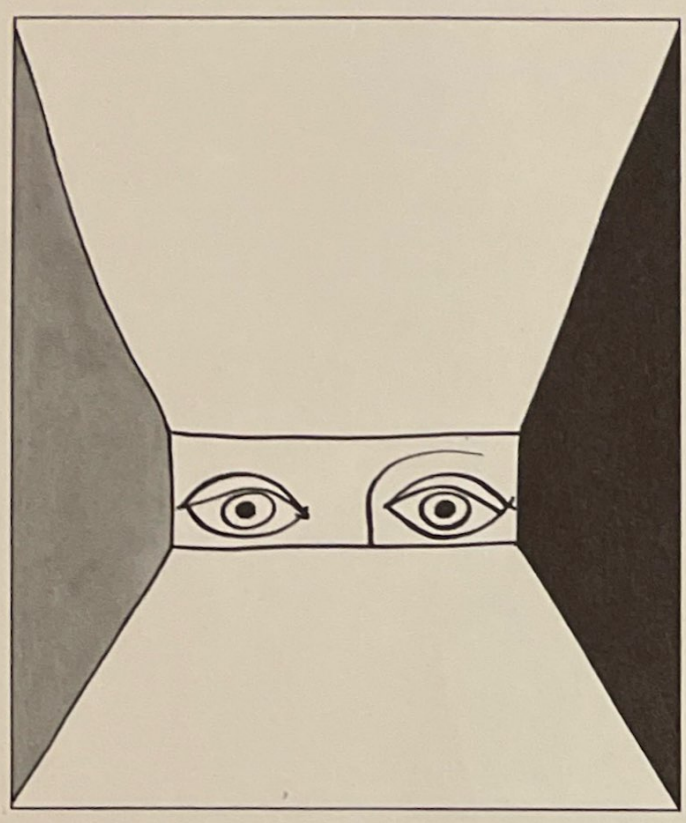
Getting to the point — slowly: There is a good deal of visual interest in this design with its winding, twisting, linear movement. The curving, snakelike motion attracts our attention but it also slows up the process of communication. However, this approach has its uses.



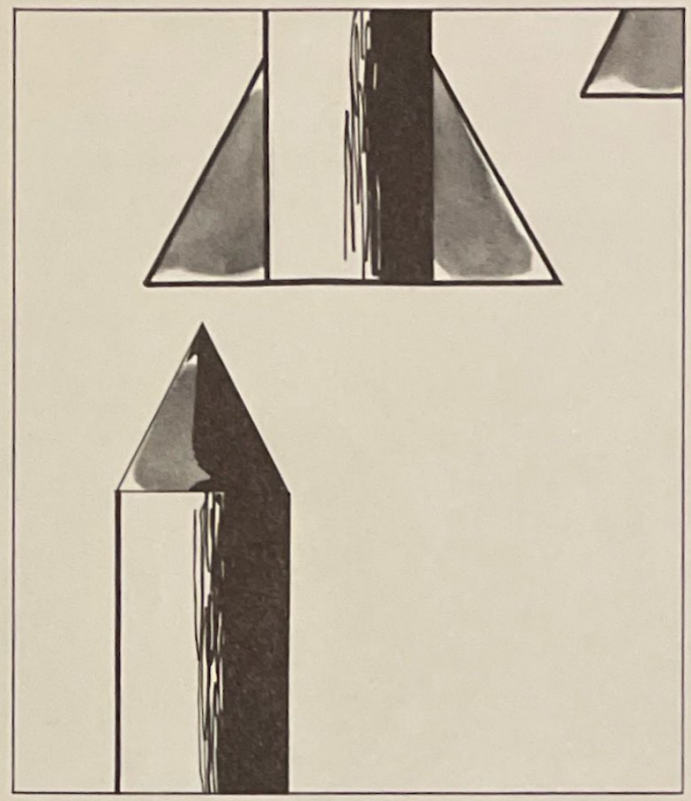
Getting to the point — fast: The direct approach goes right to the point with simplicity, avoiding all detours. In this case a quick, poster-like message is needed and this does the trick. It depends on design rather than techniques to deliver its message with the speed of a bullet.

At a glance — translating words into pictures

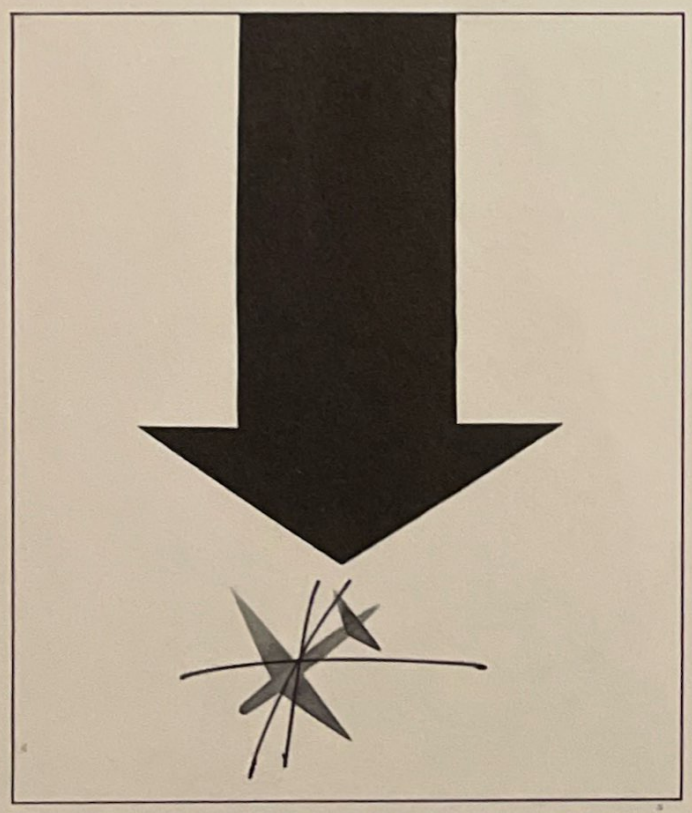
A telegram always commands more attention than a letter. And there are many times when a picture should have the dramatic punch of a telegram instead of the letter's detailed persuasion. In advertising, clear communication is vital. Finding the basic idea that will translate words into pictures is the first and all-important step in designing the ad. Once you have the idea, present it with simple force. On these two pages we show you some examples of how to do this. In each case we take a single word — it appears at the start of each caption — and interpret it in a simple design or picture.



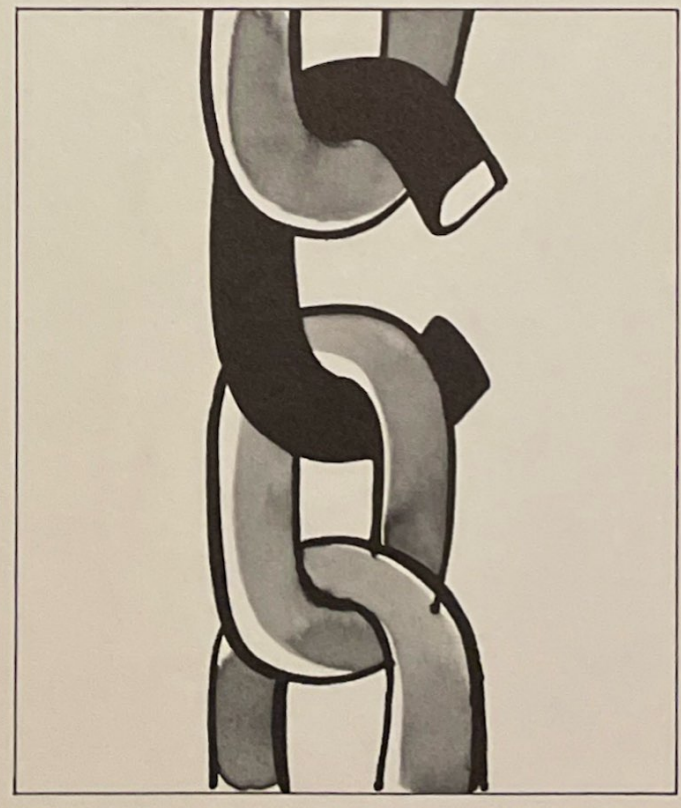
Look: Here a most obvious symbol (two eyes staring straight ahead) was chosen — but it was presented in an unexpected way. All the planes lead us back to those two eyes, which stare straight out at us as if through an opening in a box. It is finding the eyes in this unusual place that gives the symbol impact.



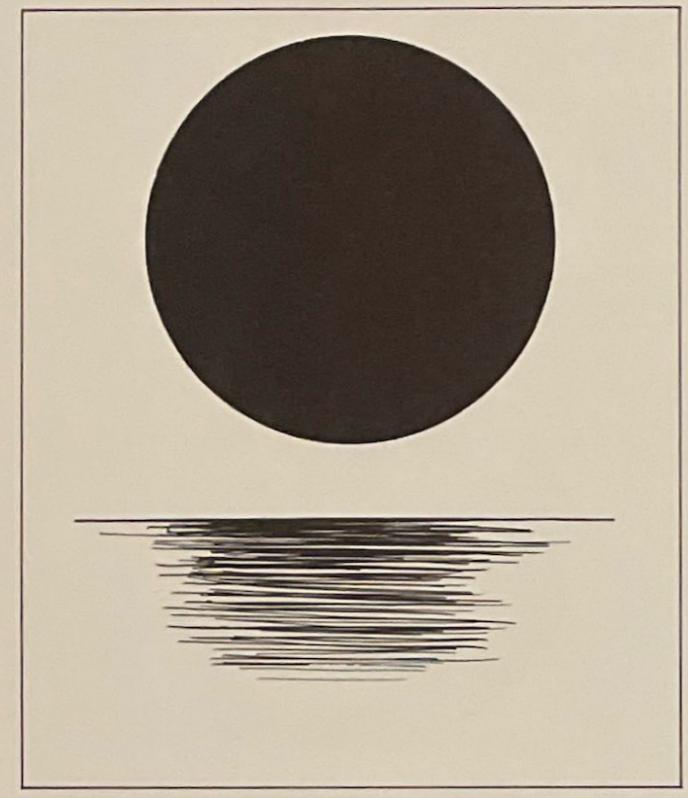
Up: The feeling of upward movement here is heightened because the rising form of the rocket is shown in three different positions. It is almost like a stop-action film in which you actually see the rocket move up — first its head and middle section move past your eyes, then its rear section, and finally the tip of the tail.



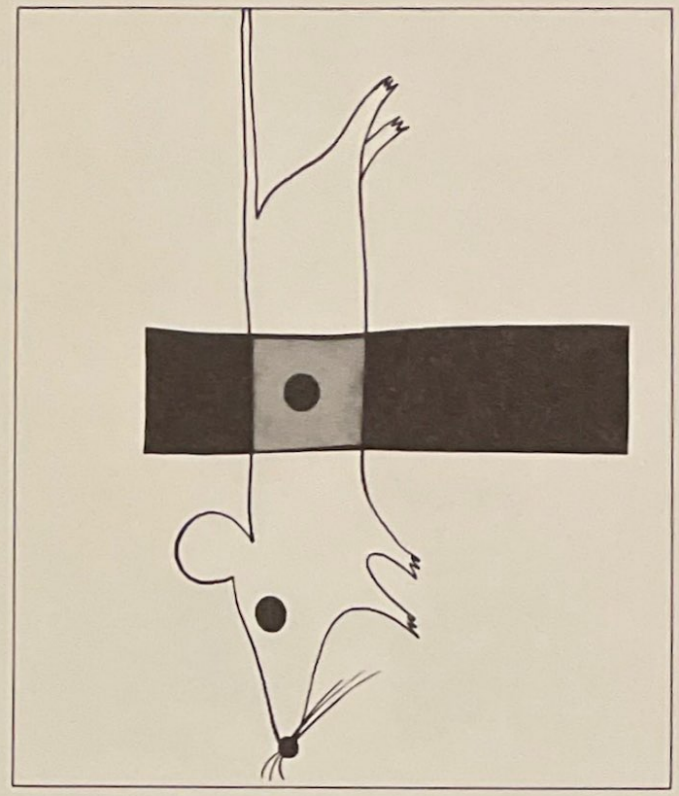
Down: Here the thrust of the large black arrow points straight down from the top border and emphasizes the falling movement of the airplane. It creates a forceful, simple statement that no elaborate design could compete with in terms of a fast, clear message.



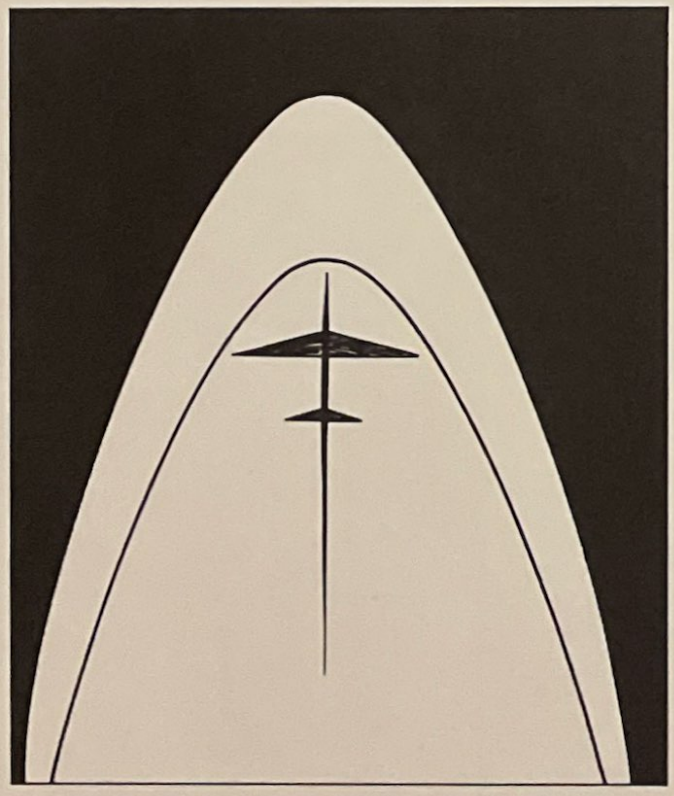
Escape: See how this simple but monumental design tells us quickly and clearly what is happening. The fairly complicated idea of escape or release is established immediately in our minds as soon as we see the one broken link. Basic designs like this communicate with great directness.



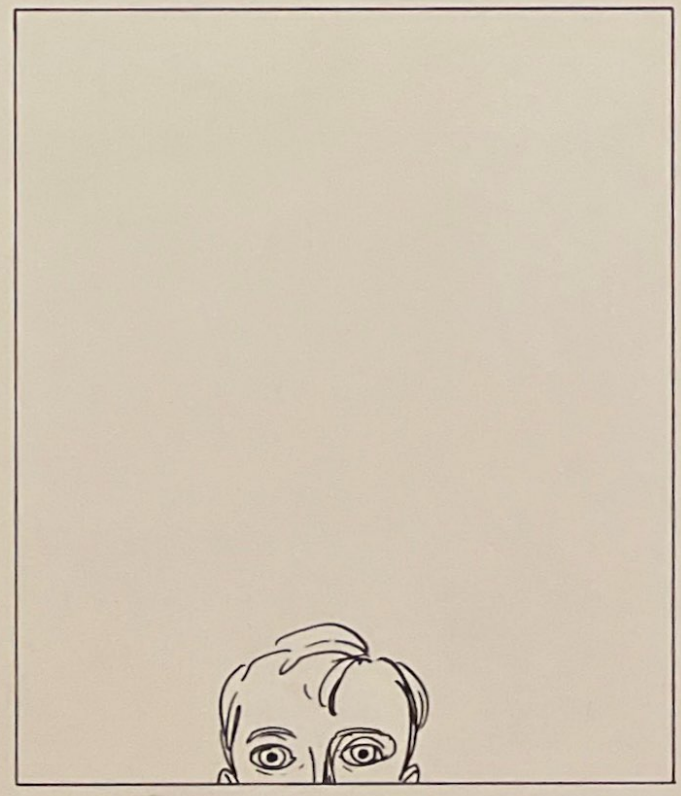
Suspense: The expected movement of a large, dark mass like this is downward, so when it hangs between sky and water it creates a feeling of suspense. We feel that something mysterious is going on in the atmosphere. It's all achieved by the proper placement of the two elements.



Research: Here is a different and interesting way to symbolize research without showing the usual test tubes, retorts and maze of glass tubing. The white mouse used in medical research is being held up for examination. The rectangle represents a glass slide used under the microscope.



Speed: Here the main impression of speed is obtained by the lines of the shock waves which precede the airplane. These lines suggest supersonic speed — breaking the sound barrier — while the vertical direction suggests shooting upward through the atmosphere.



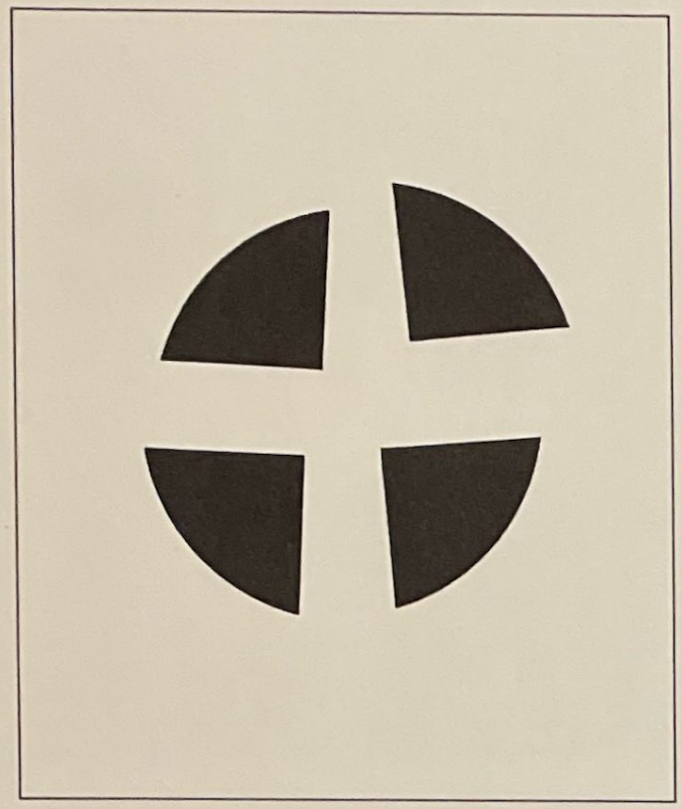
Lonely: Never be afraid to use empty space dramatically. Here, by dropping the figure almost out of the lower border, we isolate him in such a way that his loneliness is unmistakable.

Lesson **19** Famous Artists Course

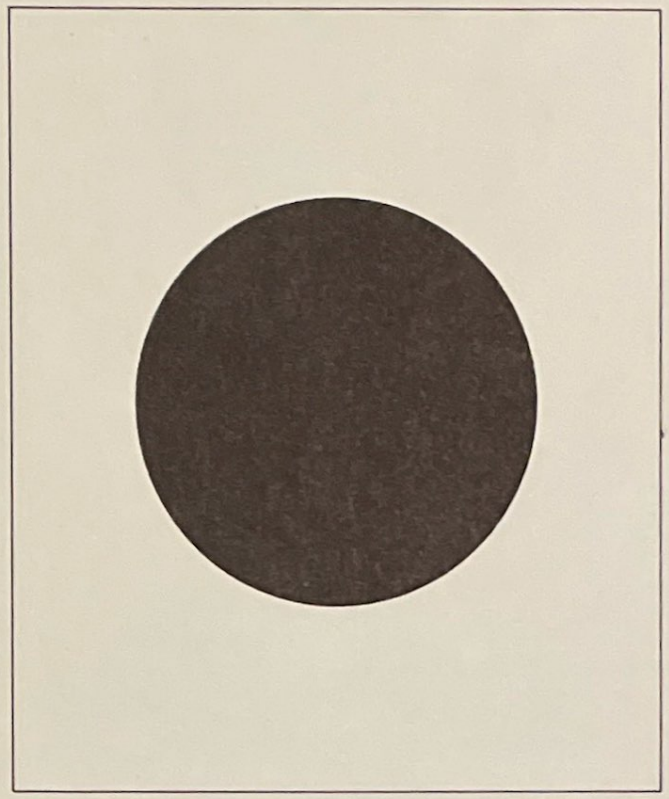
Advertising and editorial design and layout

Creating order or disorder

In the course of your day-to-day work as a designer, you are called on to solve many kinds of problems — to create many different effects. Although it may seem that order is part of everything you do, there are circumstances when you use the opposite feeling, disorder, to convey an idea. For example, a layout might be required to convey the chaos of war, fire, flood or a similar disaster. You should know how to suggest both order and disorder. The examples below show how simply and directly these contrasting ideas can be expressed, and the design principles to be kept in mind in creating each effect.

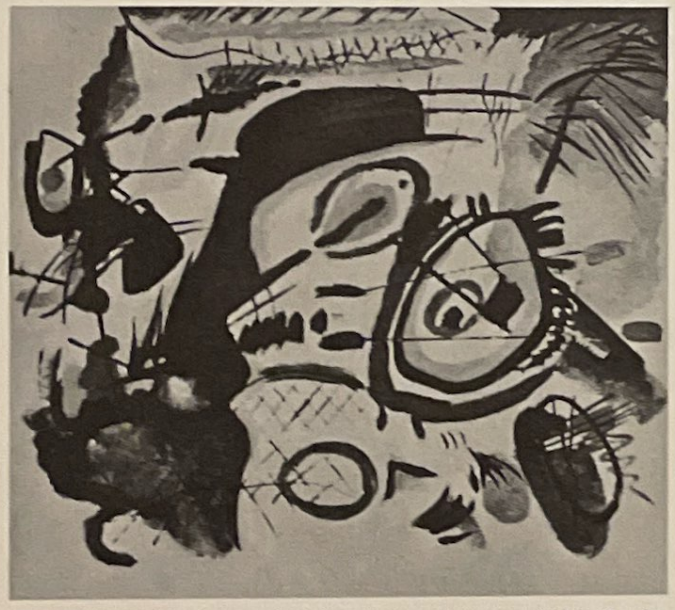


A symbol of separation — the breaking apart of the four parts of a circle — begins to suggest movement, a lack of stability and unity.



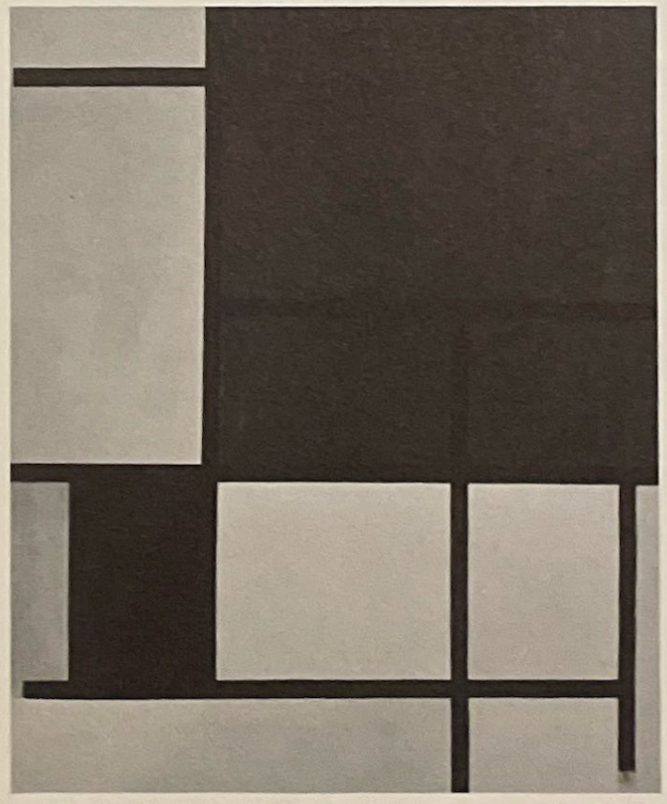
By contrast, this perfect circle with its flat dark tone is the ultimate symbol of unity. The form is whole and self-contained and, unlike the diagram at the left, there is no suggested movement or expansion away from the center.

Wassily Kandinsky, Composition 7, Fragment 1, Museum of Modern Art, Lillie P. Bliss Bequest



Kandinsky's painting carries the idea of separation suggested in the diagram above to a convincing conclusion. The picture is wild, disordered and exciting; it seems to lack any stable structure.

Piet Mondrian, Composition, 1921, Museum of Modern Art, lent by Mr. & Mrs. John L. Senior, Jr.

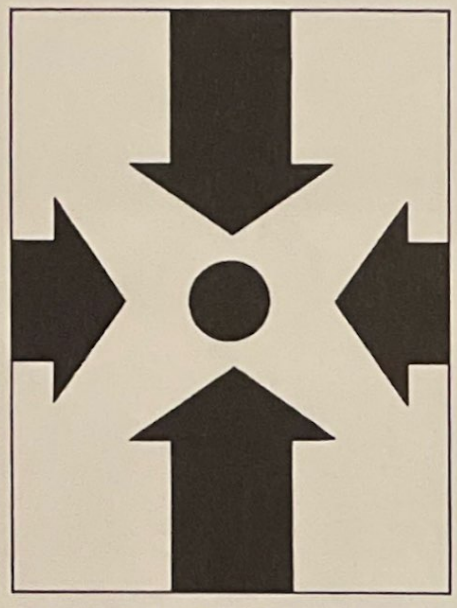


On the other hand, this painting by Mondrian is composed entirely of rectangles. It has the same calm quality of order as the circle above. The play of one right angle against another prevents any suggestion of movement.

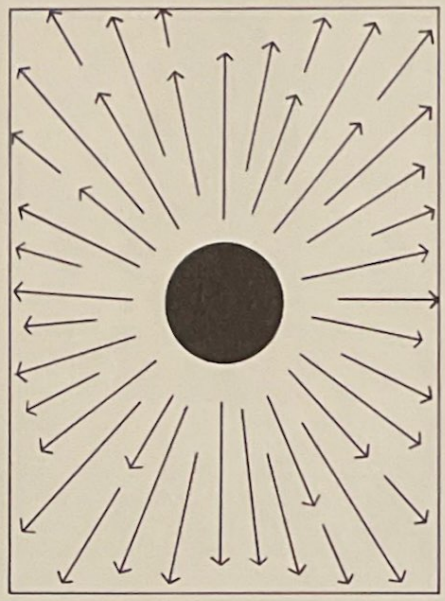
Controlling basic directions in a design

Control of movement is an important part of any design or layout, just as it is in pictorial composition. We select shapes and arrange our elements to move the viewer's eye around the design — actually direct it from one element to another. This movement itself can also be made the dominant theme of the design.

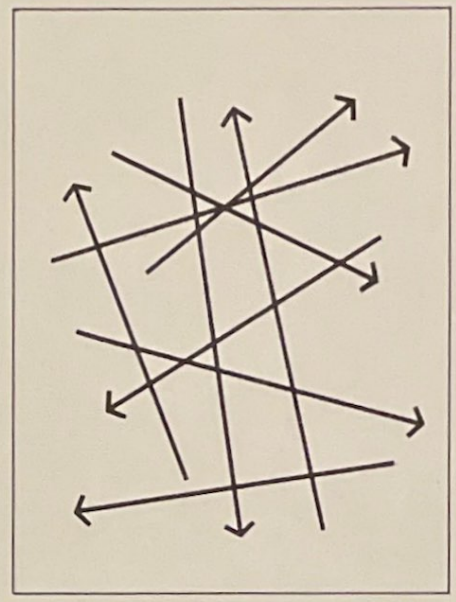
See — Observe — Remember



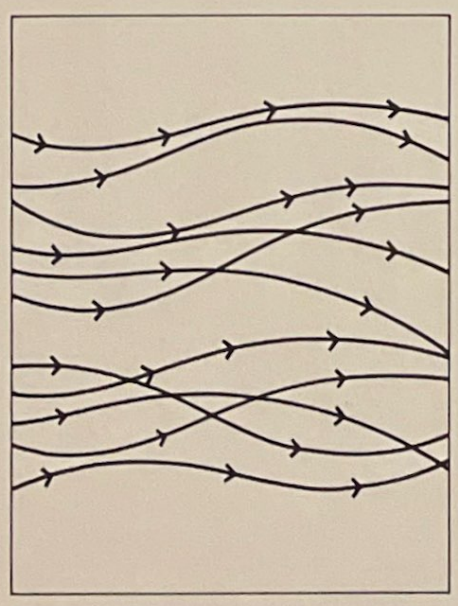
Converging: The small circle seems trapped by the heavy arrows converging on it like powerful trucks at an intersection.



Diverging: Here the effect is just the opposite — the movement is explosive and the many radiating lines of the arrows shoot out from the center to the four sides of the picture.

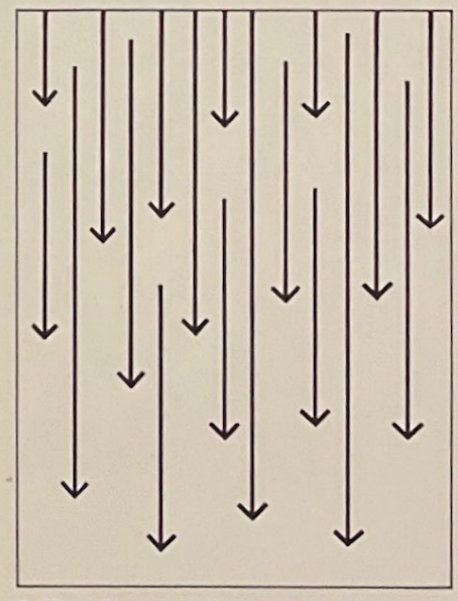


Going in all directions: Here is plain confusion with the arrowed lines going every which way. One movement cancels another.



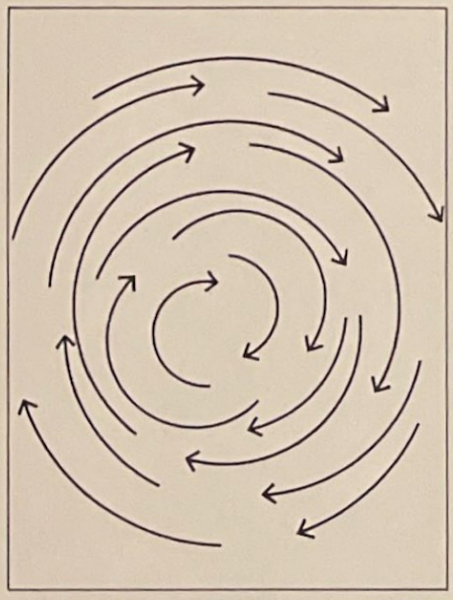
Horizontal movement: Here the movement is generally horizontal. The flowing curves create a feeling of wavelike motion.

Creating a vacuum: Placing an object between a series of flowing curved lines gives the impression of a moving stream of air or water that bends around the obstruction.

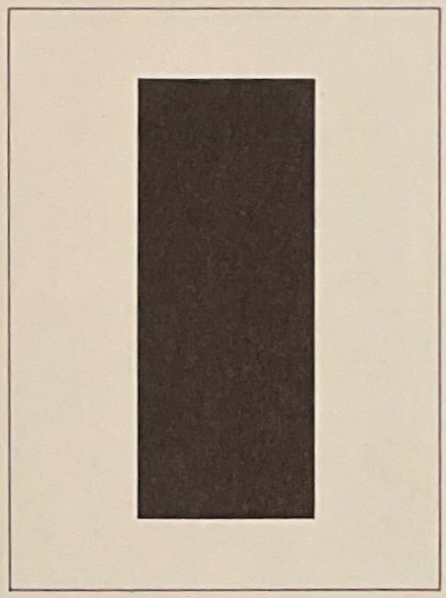


Falling: The repeated pattern of arrows creates an insistent downward movement that keeps drawing our eye to the bottom of the frame.

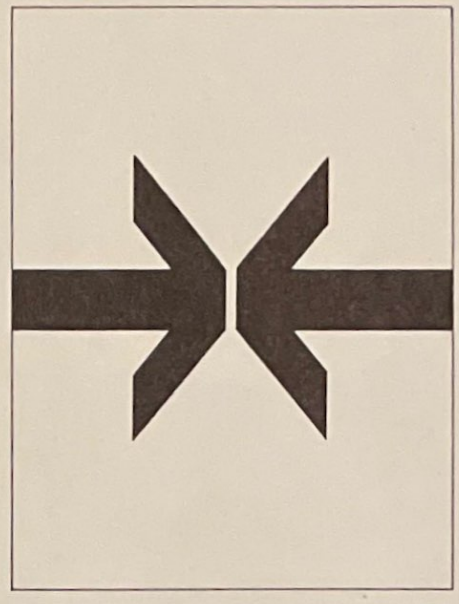
More symbolic effects



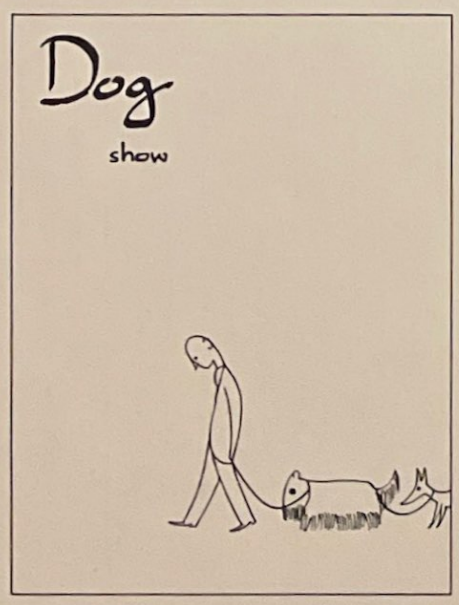
Rotation: This arrangement immediately suggests spinning — clockwise rotation — and there is a real sense of swift circular movement as these curved arrows follow each other around.



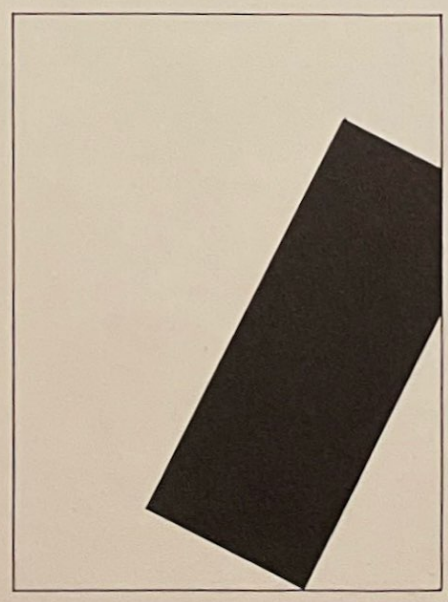
Static: A vertical form with a wide, firm base conveys no sense of movement — it is fixed, static. This is true whether it be a picture of a building or a column of type in the middle of a layout.



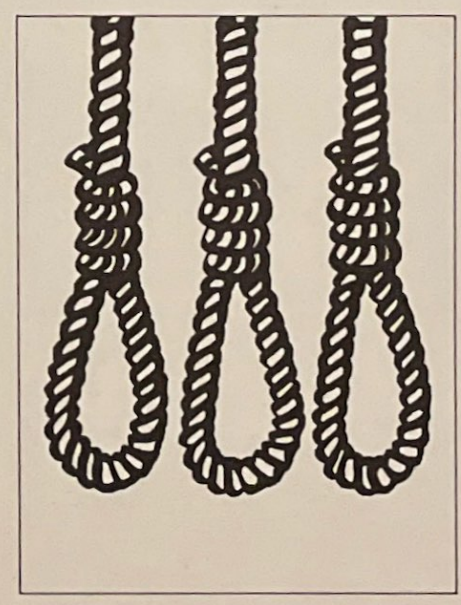
Conflict: Two forces meeting head-on from left and right we associate very quickly with conflict. There would be different effects if the direction were changed. For example, in a diagonal position the two arrows might suggest greater force.



Amusing: Although this is not a symbol like the other arrangements on this page, humor has its own symbolism and immediately establishes the character of this layout as light and gay.

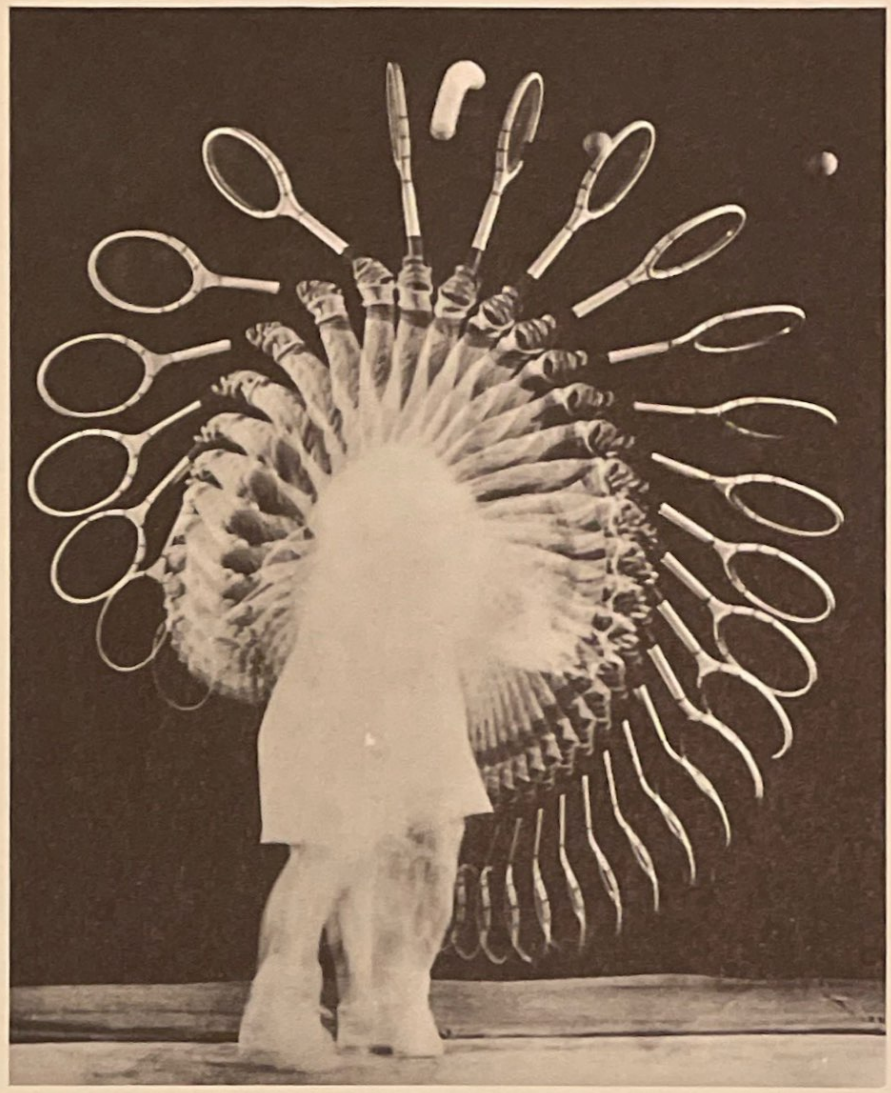


Unbalanced: The same rectangle that appeared so static in the diagram above now conveys a sense of instability as it falls to the right.



Realism: These three nooses convey a stark sense of drama and impending death. They have immediate meaning — strong and to the point.

Photo by Dr. Harold E. Edgerton



Here's one example of a unique technique of photography. This is a stroboscopic photograph which creates the illusion of real motion in a still picture. Where movement is an integral part of the picture idea a multiple-exposure photo is well suited to the job.

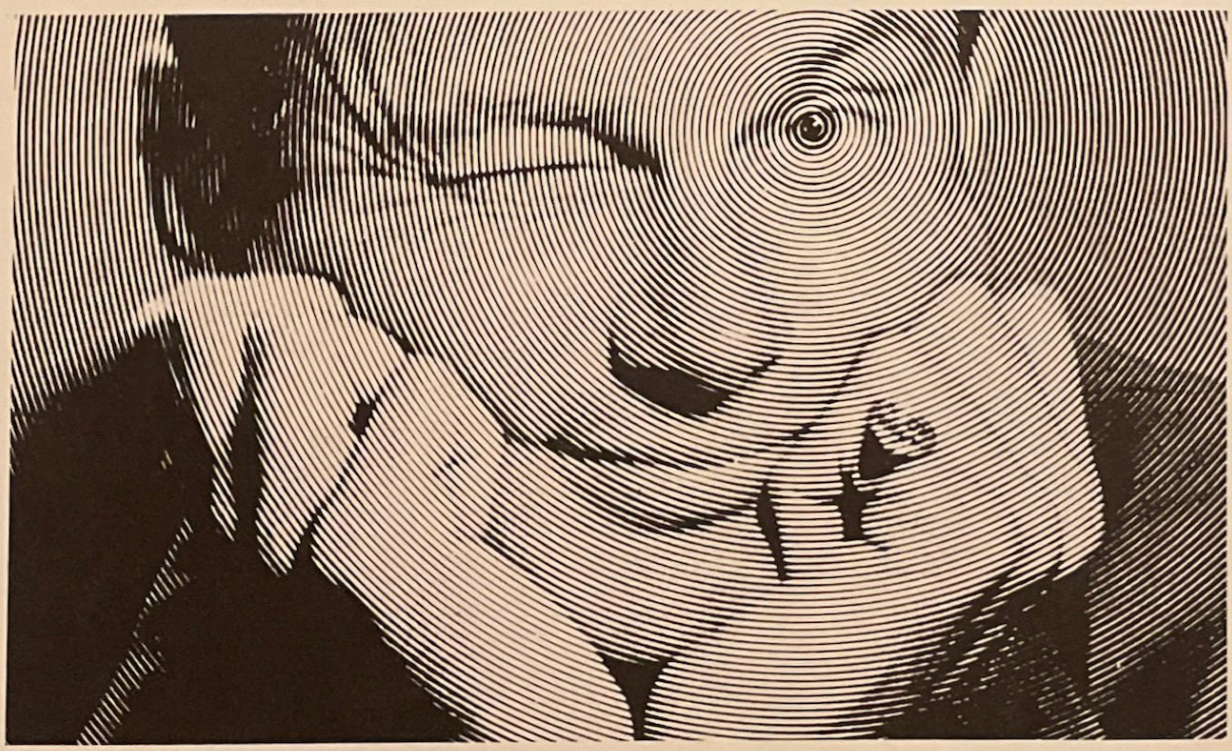
Special effects

The best designers will use any means they can think of to create the effect they want — to get across or strengthen the message of a design. For example, they are well aware of the unusual effects obtainable with special types of photography or printing.

The field of photography offers many striking and unusual design possibilities. Not only can the camera itself be used in imaginative and creative ways, but many ingenious effects can be achieved in the darkroom through developing and printing processes. Keep your eyes open for effects that can be "stoppers" and help communicate your idea.

You won't often use such effects because their application is limited. These pictures are simply to show you that your inspiration and even solutions to design problems will often come from the most unexpected sources.

Courtesy Edstan Studio



This is a technique in which the photoengraver uses a spiral pattern instead of the usual halftone screen. By placing the center of the spiral directly over the open eye it is sharply emphasized — it seems to vibrate and almost comes alive.

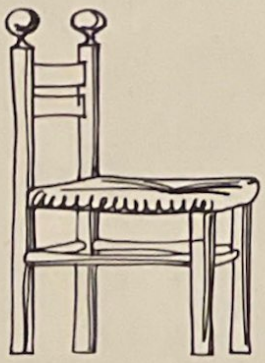
Symbols — and how to design them

Symbols have been an important means of communication since the earliest days of history. A flag is a symbol that identifies a nation; the cross and the crescent are prominent examples of symbols that identify religions. During the Middle Ages, when most people couldn't read or write, symbols were the only form of visual communication between the illiterate masses and the tradesmen. Symbols were hung outside shops to catch the people's attention and identify the bakery, tavern, blacksmith shop, etc. Common survivals of this practice are the three balls of the pawnshop and the striped pole outside the barbershop. Many businesses today are known by symbols or trademarks.

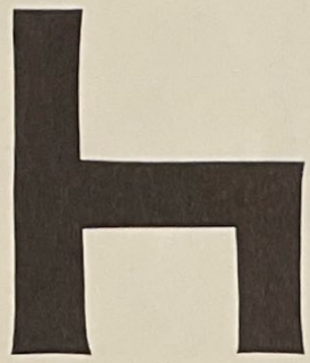
Symbols have a wide range of uses in design and advertising. Their most common characteristic is simplicity — for they must deliver their message with the utmost clarity and directness.

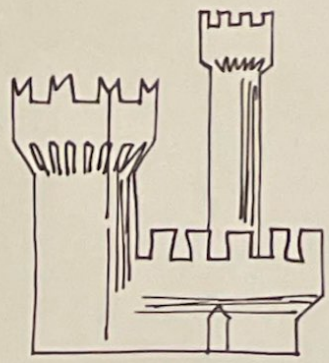
In developing a symbol, you select the most characteristic features of an object. An object is recognized by its basic structure, so you start by leaving out its secondary features and details. You must also be sure to choose a view that reveals this structure. The chair on this page is a good example of what we mean. As a symbol, it is viewed from the side and is represented by just three lines. Anything much more complicated would be a picture rather than a symbol.

Study the objects on these pages and see how the accompanying symbols, some of which go back to medieval times, were derived from them. They represent the kind of thinking you must do when you develop symbols in your own work.

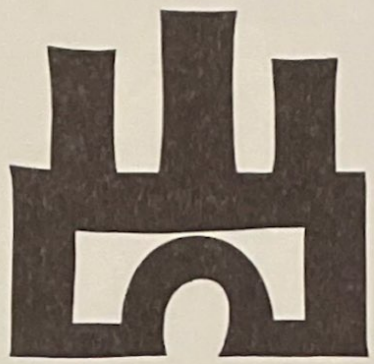


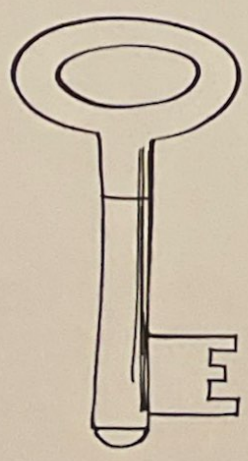
Chair



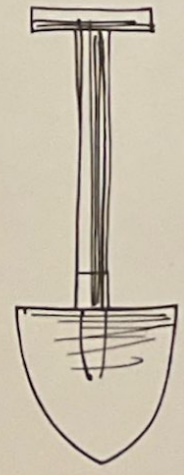


Medieval city

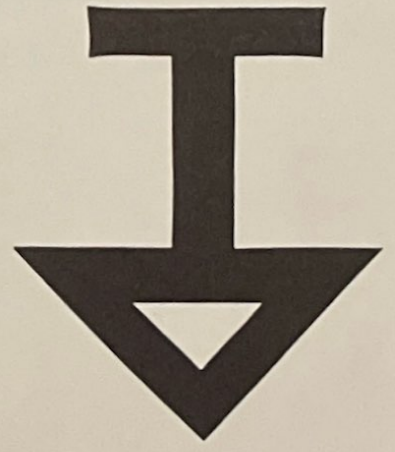


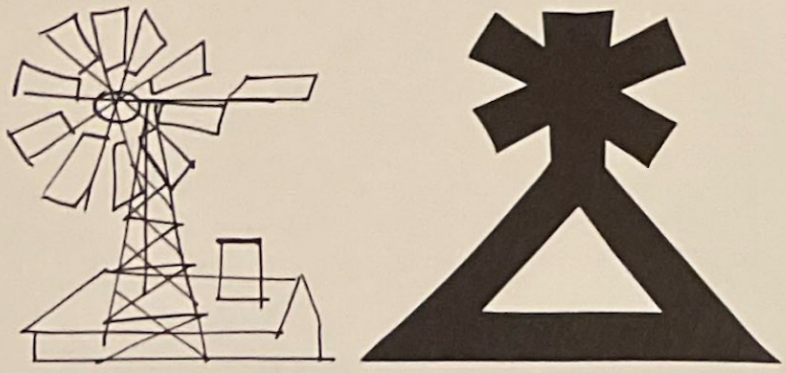


Key

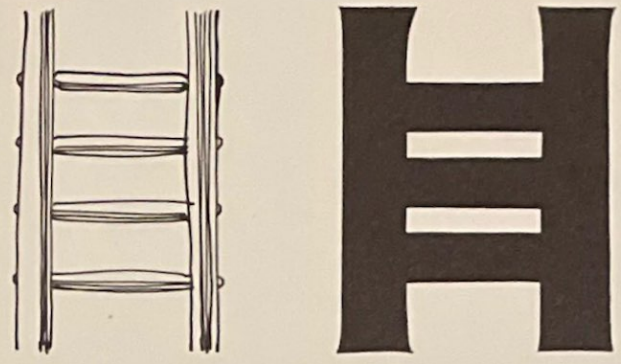


Spade

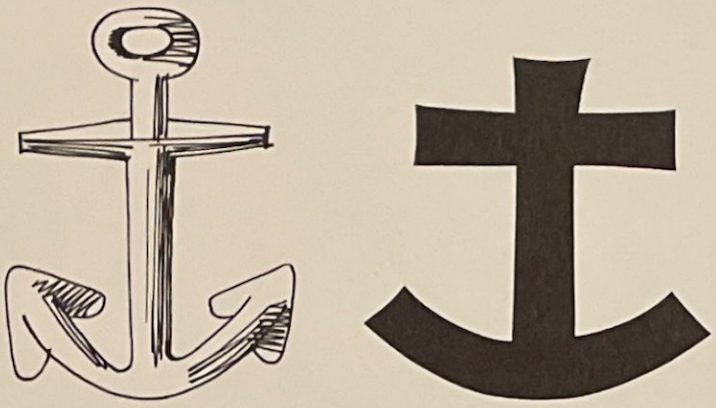




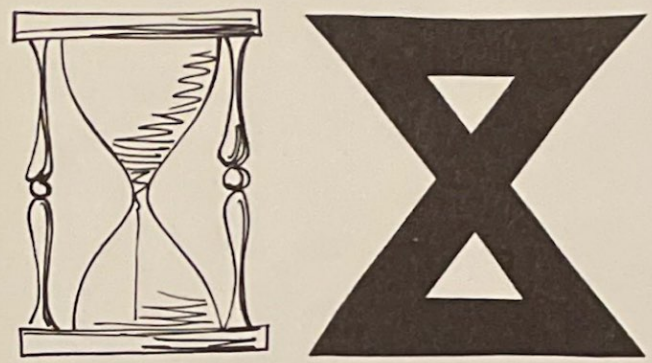
Windmill



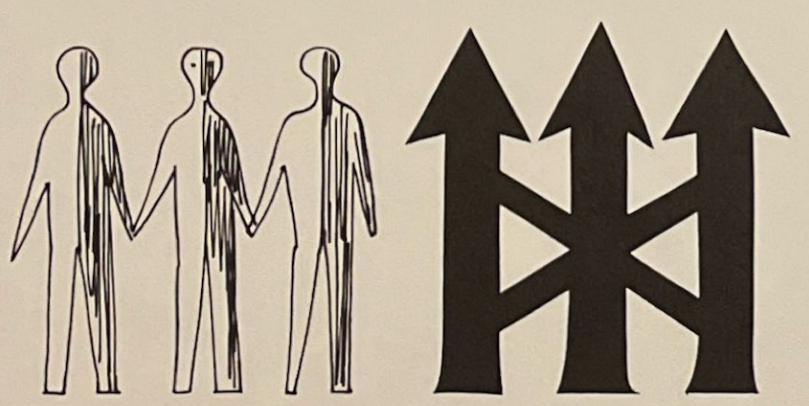
Ladder



Anchor



Hourglass



Adapting a symbol: Directly above is another medieval symbol, this one — unity. The distinguished designer Leo Lionni took this symbol and modified it *(right)* to create one of the most effective designs in the "Great Ideas of Western Man" series. His changes, cleverly made to carry out the basic copy idea of judgment and conciliation, still retain the strength of the original symbol.

Great Ideas of Western Man
ONE OF A SERIES
EPICTETUS
on Philosophy
Here is the beginning of philosophy:
a recognition of the conflicts between men,
a search for their cause,
a condemnation of mere opinion . . .
and the DISCOVERY OF A STANDARD OF JUDGMENT.
CONTAINER CORPORATION OF AMERICA

Advertisement by Container Corp. of America
from the series "Great Ideas of Western Man"

Trademarks — corporate symbols

The modern corporate trademark is today's equivalent of the old-time tradesman's sign. It has the same purpose: to identify the company immediately. Therefore its design must catch the eye of the viewer, and be simple enough for him to remember and recognize. If the trademark can also suggest the quality of the firm's service or product, so much the better.

When designing a trademark, you have considerable leeway. You can use a fairly literal picture of the company's product, a realistic symbol, a logotype of a distinctively designed name or initials, an abstract shape — or any combination of these. But your result must be unique . . . original . . . simple. And it must identify the company with the utmost clarity.

Remember that your trademark will have to be adaptable to many different uses. It must reproduce well for packages, stationery, billboards, television and other mediums. It has to show up effectively in color or black and white — and retain its unique identity even when drastically reduced in size. All of the designs below meet these requirements admirably.

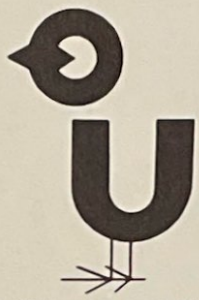
It takes a long time — and a lot of advertising money — to teach the public to identify a trademark. So when you design one, aim at permanence. Do one that can apply to any future products as well as those the firm now turns out. The trademark should be in a style that will not date, so that the company can use it for a long period. Simplicity ages well. Some of the trademarks here are more than forty years old — yet they seem as contemporary as if they had been created yesterday.

This symbol of twins is one of the classic trademarks in Europe. It has been used for over forty years by the Zwillingwerke (Twin Factories), which manufactures knives and scissors.

The CBS trademark is a perfect symbol for a television station. The stylized eye is so directly and simply designed, the conception so right, that this design will stay young for a long time.

In the Alcoa Aluminum trademark the two triangles arranged in the form of an hourglass are a powerful symbol which represents timeless achievement.

In the trademark of the New Haven Railroad the serif letter forms, particularly the H, remind us of the cross-sectional shape of the railroad track itself. This is a good example of creative lettering.



This gay little bird makes a suitable trademark for a Japanese toy company.

The symbol of the Mercedes-Benz automobile is one of the most graceful and at the same time powerful of all trademarks. The idea of a star enclosed in the steering wheel is highly appropriate.

Rejuvenating trademarks

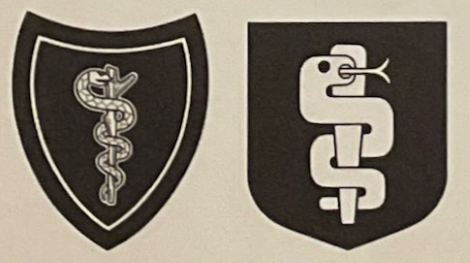
With time, a company may decide its trademark needs updating. This does not mean that the old symbol, with its dearly bought identification value, should be discarded. Instead, you must retain the character of the trademark but make it look contemporary.

Let's take three famous trademarks and consider how we might rejuvenate them. Each has great validity in its present form — we are merely demonstrating the approach that might be used if the company wanted to redesign the trademark.

Courtesy Liberty Mutual Insurance Co.

At left you see the present trademark, at right the "rejuvenation." Merely the head of Miss Liberty is kept in the new version. The strong contrast of light and dark forms a clean, bold design.

Courtesy United Medical Service, Inc.



Our new Blue Shield symbol is essentially simpler than the present one. Without the thin white border the shield appears stronger. The characteristic shape of the snake is all we need to identify it.

Courtesy General Electric Co.

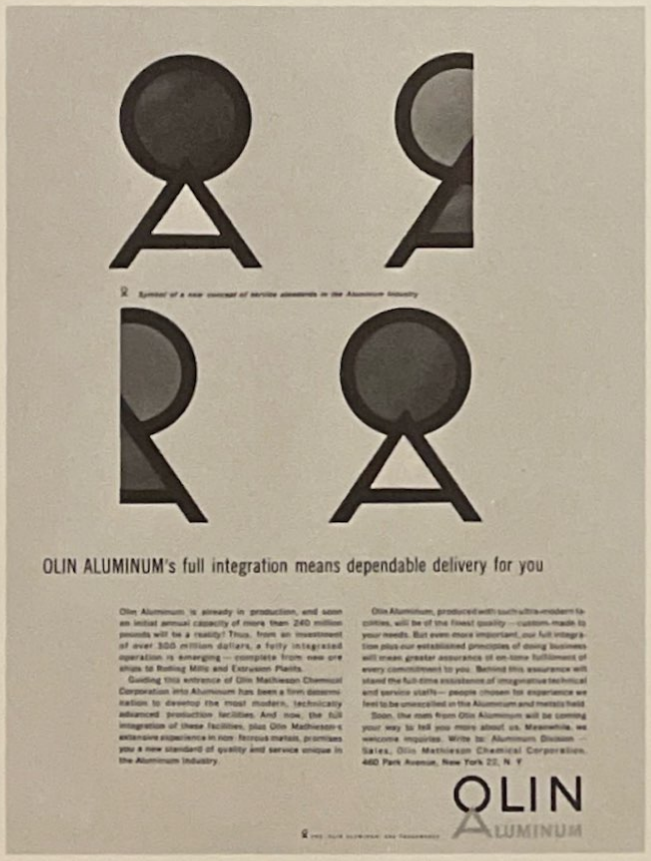
The essential letters are retained. But, by substituting block letters for the script and a smooth circle for the scrollwork, and reversing the values, we create a version with a crisp, modern look.

Establishing a corporate trademark

The problem here was to introduce a new corporate symbol for a new division of the Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation – Olin Aluminum. The plan was to take full advantage of the power of repetition, using the trademark itself as the repeated motif. This trademark was to be featured in all ads of the campaign – so that the public would become familiar with the symbol. The important point was to give it impact – use size, color, and contrast to the fullest in order to plant the image in the public consciousness as strongly as possible.

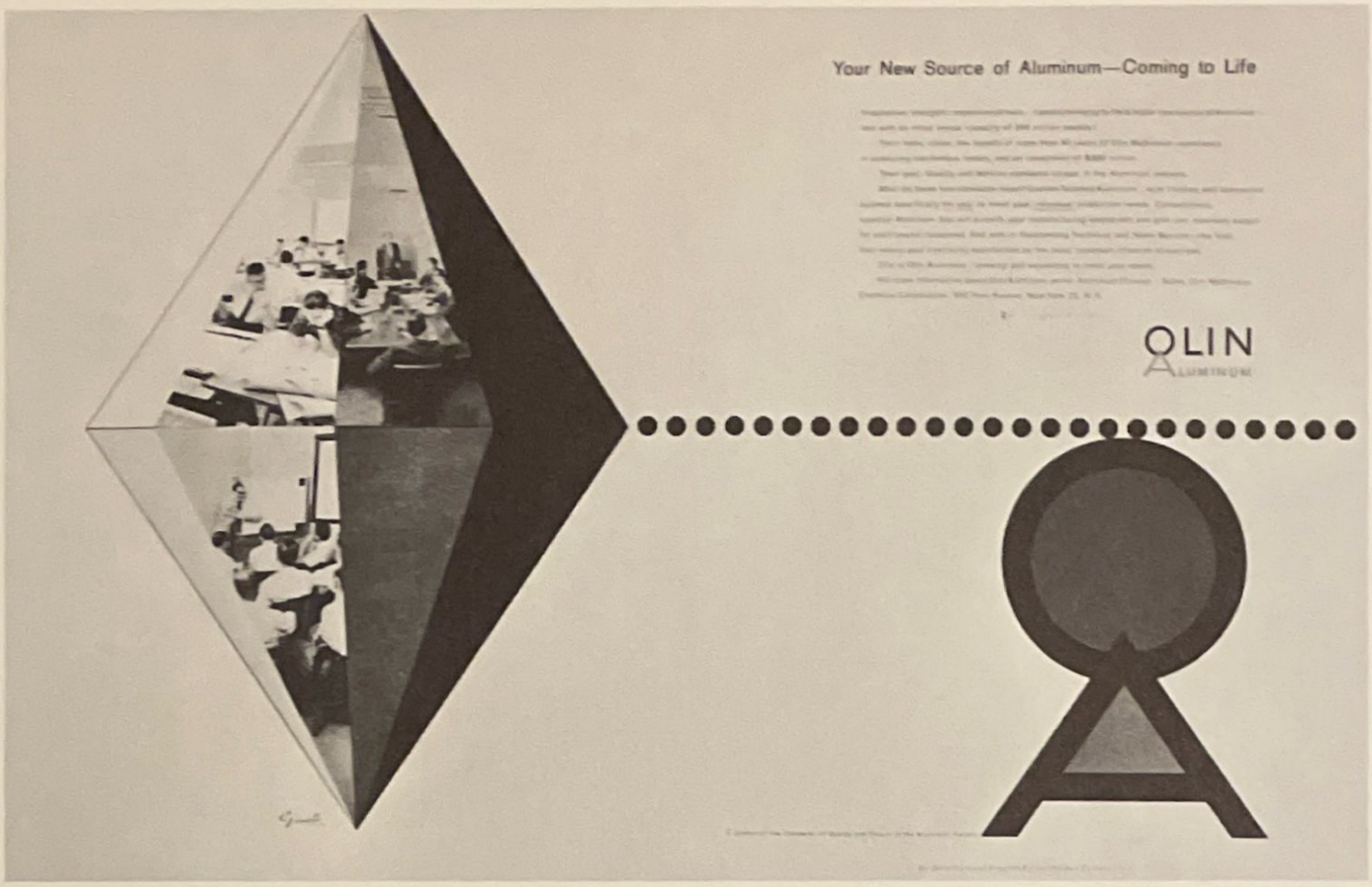
Advertisements courtesy Olin Mathieson/Aluminum

This is the first ad, which appeared as a two-page spread in national business and news magazines. In this case the aim was to achieve a shock effect — a "punch in the eye." The trademark was monumental in size, the letters were outlined in broad black bands and, for maximum impact, were filled in with bright red, yellow, and violet, here shown as gray tones. The trademark on the right-hand page of the spread is cropped to make it seem even larger.



This was designed for a single-page magazine ad. Two of the trademarks are cropped to suggest an allover "pattern" effect — as if this were a section of a piece of drapery. The colors were still bright red, yellow, and violet, and they were further strengthened by the black.

This single-page ad used the same pattern principle. As in the first ad, the trademark is cut off at the right and gives the impression of more trademarks moving in from outside the right margin. This cropping also creates a feeling of continuity and movement that arouses curiosity.



The client now felt that the trademark had been presented as forcefully as possible — the first series of ads had had its full impact. Therefore, in a second series, a new element was introduced with the trademark.

This two-page ad was designed to explain to the public the different activities connected with the starting of Olin's new industrial project — the architects making plans, the executive meetings, etc. To unify these pictures into a single unit, simple and arresting, the designer chose to enclose them within the shape of a diamond. This symbol, besides being decorative and unusual in shape, creates a feeling of accuracy, appropriate in an ad for an industrial company concerned with precision workmanship. The photographs on the diamond each had a different tint, giving the design a three-dimensional feeling. The problem of connecting the company activities and trademark was solved by the large dotted line.

Advertisements courtesy Olin Mathieson/Aluminum

Here, on this double-spread ad, photographs were shown of a new Olin Aluminum factory almost completed. The trademark continued to be the most prominent element in the ad — the violet and red were still inside the outlines, giving them great strength. The photographs were black and white with a light color tint.

This is a single-page ad emphasizing the use of Olin Aluminum for housing materials and household objects. Rectangles of aluminum (they were in bright, attractive colors in the original ad) come out of the trademark at the top and fall into the symbolic house, also gaily colored. Balancing the trademark over the roof suggests the lightness of this modern building material. Throughout the series the trademark has varied in size and color, but it has always been important — since the basic purpose of the campaign was to make this symbol, and what it stood for, familiar to the public.

In the next series of ads the trademark is gradually made less dominant. By now the company symbol has been fairly well established and other designs and pictures can be used as major motifs. In this double-page spread the staring eyes illustrate the headline "Zealous attention to detail." The wedge shape of white background at the left leads directly to the eyes. Bright, strong colors were used in the trademark, less brilliant ones in the design itself, and all were accented by the black shape to the right.

Light, bright Olin Aluminum adds the right touch to modern living

More and more, imaginative manufacturers are using Olin Aluminum to create a stunning galaxy of housing materials and household objects. Enameled aluminum siding, for instance—colorful, corrosion-resistant, easily cleaned with a garden hose. Or worksaving, lastingly beautiful railings and awnings, doors and windows, appliances and furniture. Are you building? Modernizing? Olin Aluminum, today's fast-moving, modern metal, adds luster and lightheartedness to your life.

OLIN MATHIESON · METALS DIVISION · 400 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK 22, NEW YORK

OLIN ALUMINUM

Advertisements courtesy Olin Mathieson/Aluminum

Zealous attention to detail:

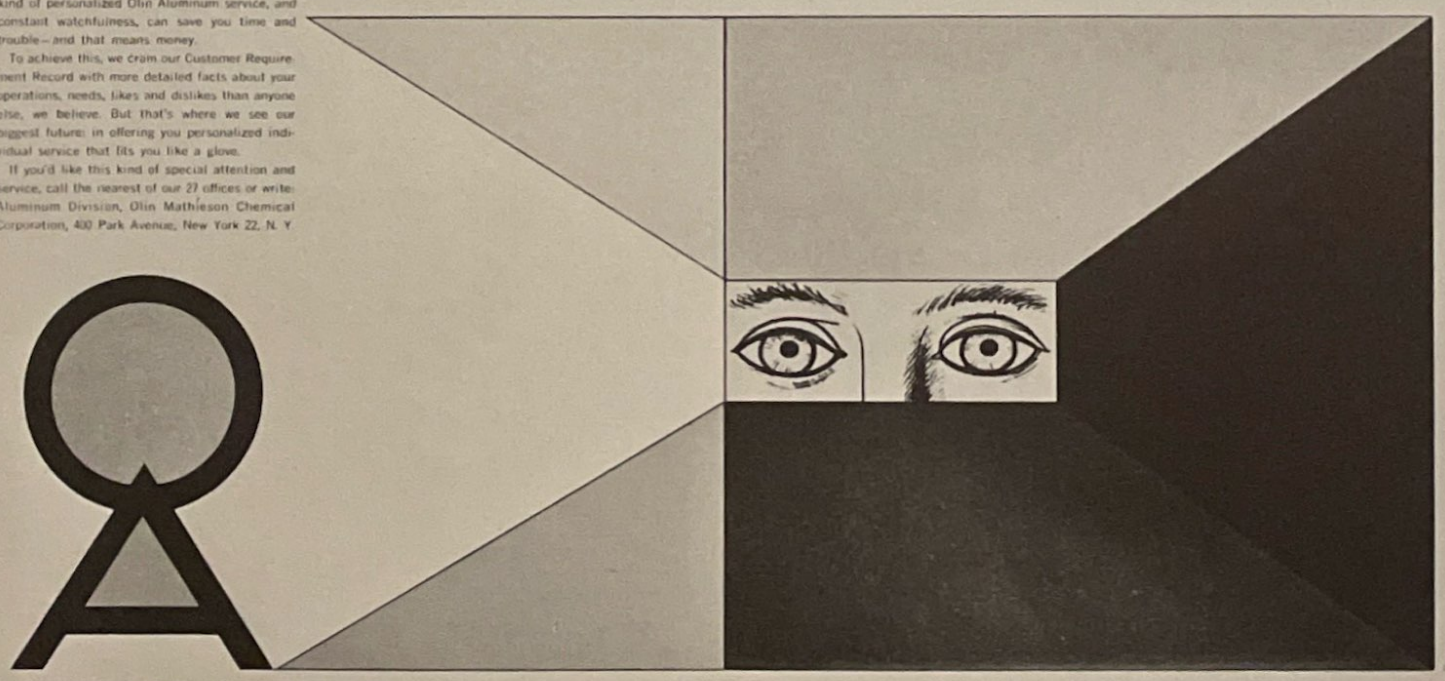
that's the Olin Aluminum way

of saving you money...

Product that's exactly what you want . . . inspected to your individual standards . . . packed and shipped in the bulks and sizes you can best handle. This kind of personalized Olin Aluminum service, and constant watchfulness, can save you time and trouble—and that means money.

To achieve this, we cram our Customer Requirement Record with more detailed facts about your operations, needs, likes and dislikes than anyone else, we believe. But that's where we see our biggest future: in offering you personalized individual service that fits you like a glove.

If you'd like this kind of special attention and service, call the nearest of our 27 offices or write: Aluminum Division, Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation, 400 Park Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.



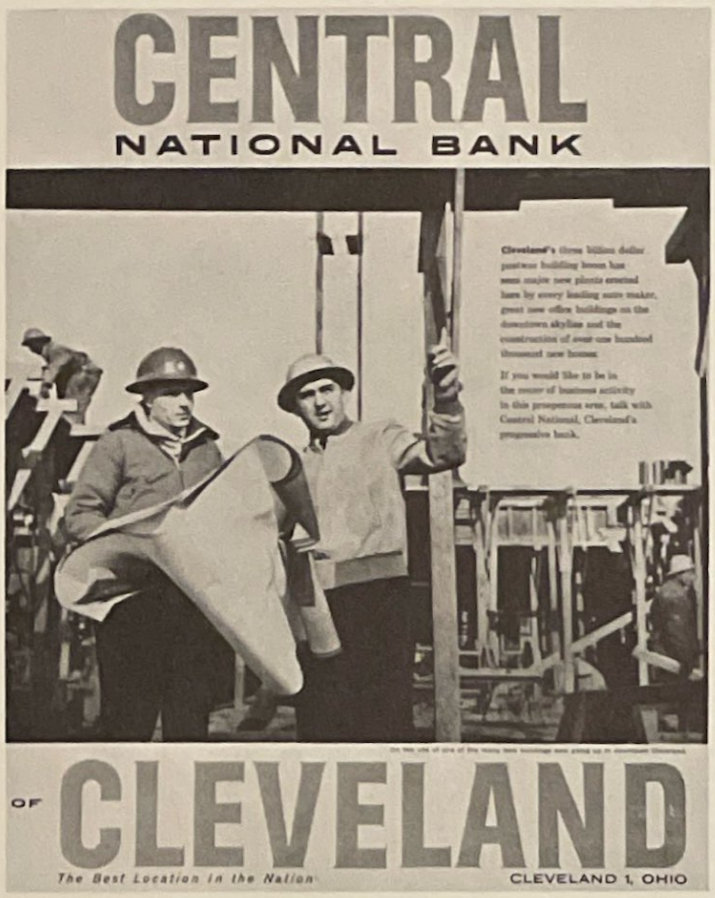
Symbol of New Standards of Quality and Service in the Aluminum Industry

Traditional and contemporary layouts

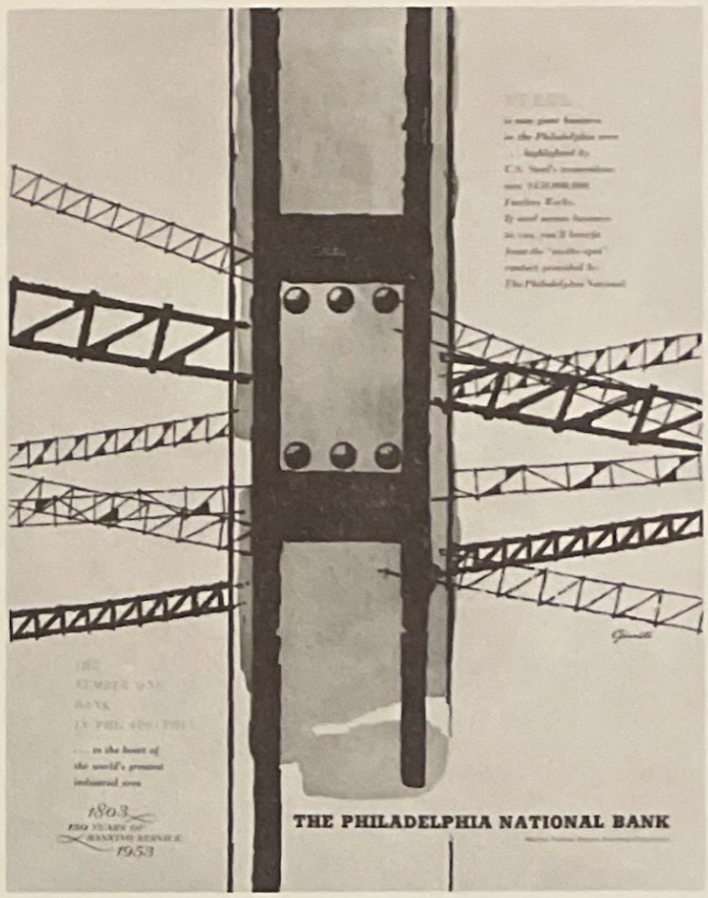
On these two pages we consider two contrasting kinds of layouts – the traditional and the contemporary. Each is quite different in its approach and each has its strong points.

The layouts on this page are particularly interesting because all of them are ads for banks. The upper two stress the relationship of banking to construction – the lower two emphasize the bank's role in the chemical business. The two on the left are traditional layouts featuring a bold use of logotype and photographs that deliver their message clearly and forcefully. The ads on the right rely on strong, symbolic designs placed directly in the middle of the layout with plenty of white space and a smaller, more modest logotype.

Courtesy Central National Bank of Cleveland



Courtesy Philadelphia National Bank

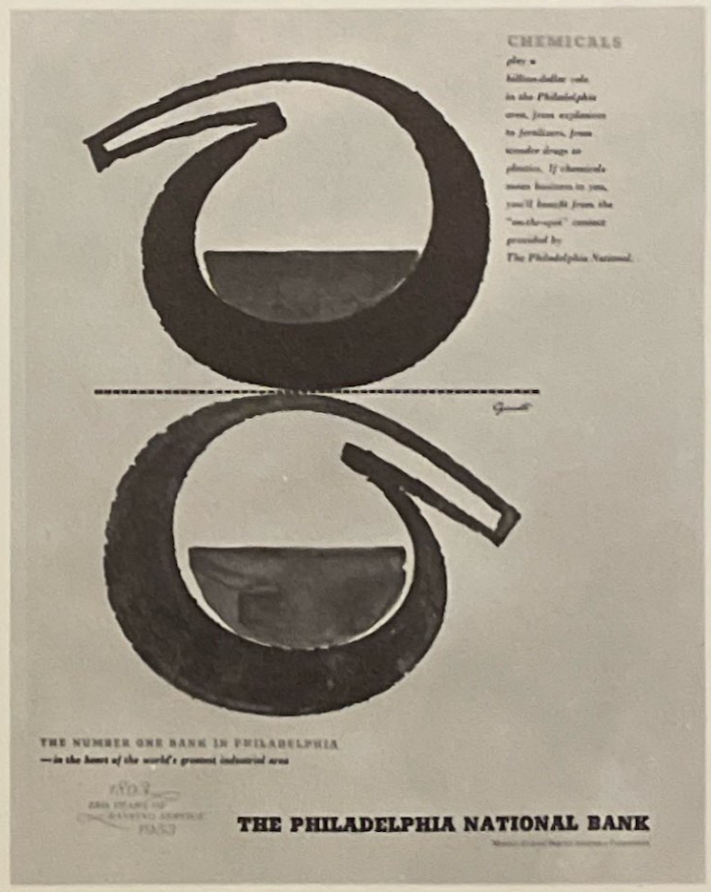


Courtesy Central National Bank of Cleveland

CENTRAL
NATIONAL BANK
If you'd like to be in the center of business activity in one of the nation's foremost research centers (where 511 laboratories spend more than $85 million a year) talk to Central National, Cleveland's progressive bank. One of the fifty largest banks in America.
OF CLEVELAND
The Best Location in the Nation
CLEVELAND 1, OHIO

Traditional: These two ads rely chiefly on size for impact and attention. The pictures support the copy idea of being in the center of the busy, thriving area of Cleveland. The monumental scale of the pictures and type in these ads gives great visual impact – a sense of hugeness on the page suggests a similar hugeness of the businesses and of the bank's capacity to serve these industrial giants.

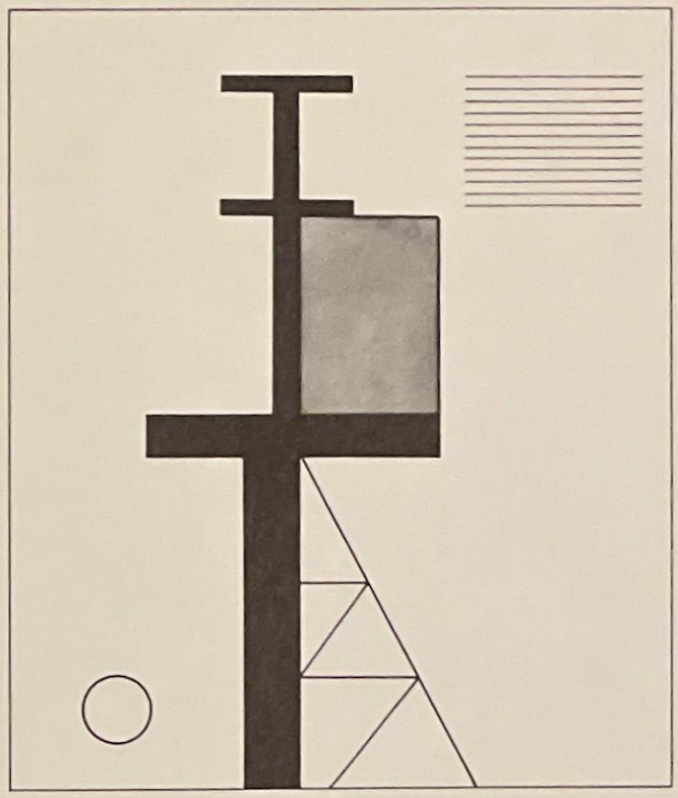
Courtesy Philadelphia National Bank


CHEMICALS
THE NUMBER ONE BANK IN PHILADELPHIA
—in the heart of the world's greatest industrial area
THE PHILADELPHIA NATIONAL BANK

Contemporary: The two ads above have exactly the same purpose as those at the left, but they approach the problem differently. The copy says virtually the same thing – being "on the spot" in a bustling business city. However, the designs are symbolic rather than literal. Although essentially simple, their bold, direct technique creates impact and interest.

Courtesy Bethlehem Steel Co.

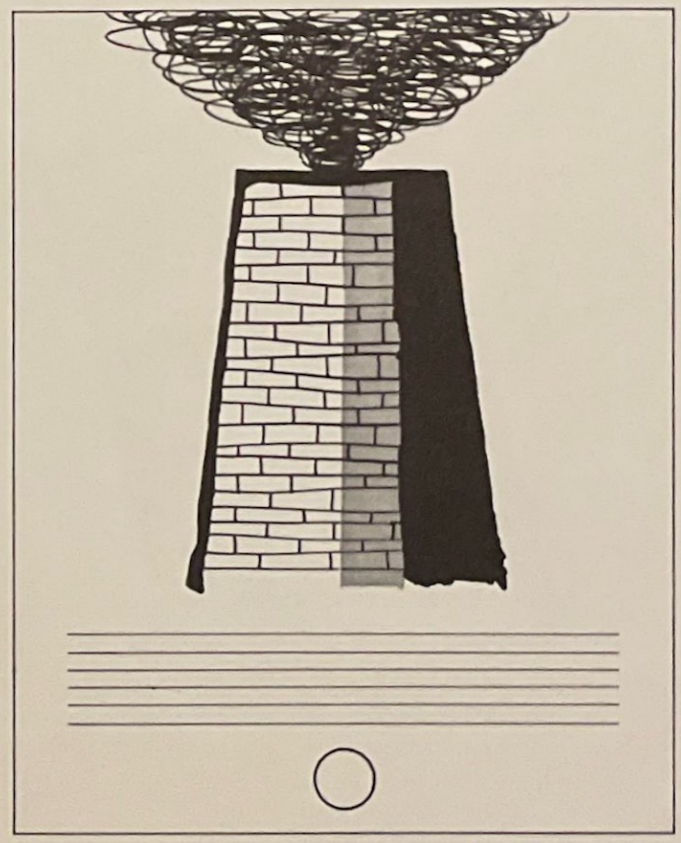
This is a traditional full-page layout. A large photograph, a smaller one, a headline, and three columns of copy are used to explain a new miracle of steel construction. The advertiser's logotype and trademark are prominently displayed for remembrance value. The message of this institutional ad is a fairly long one, and all of the page is used to communicate it.



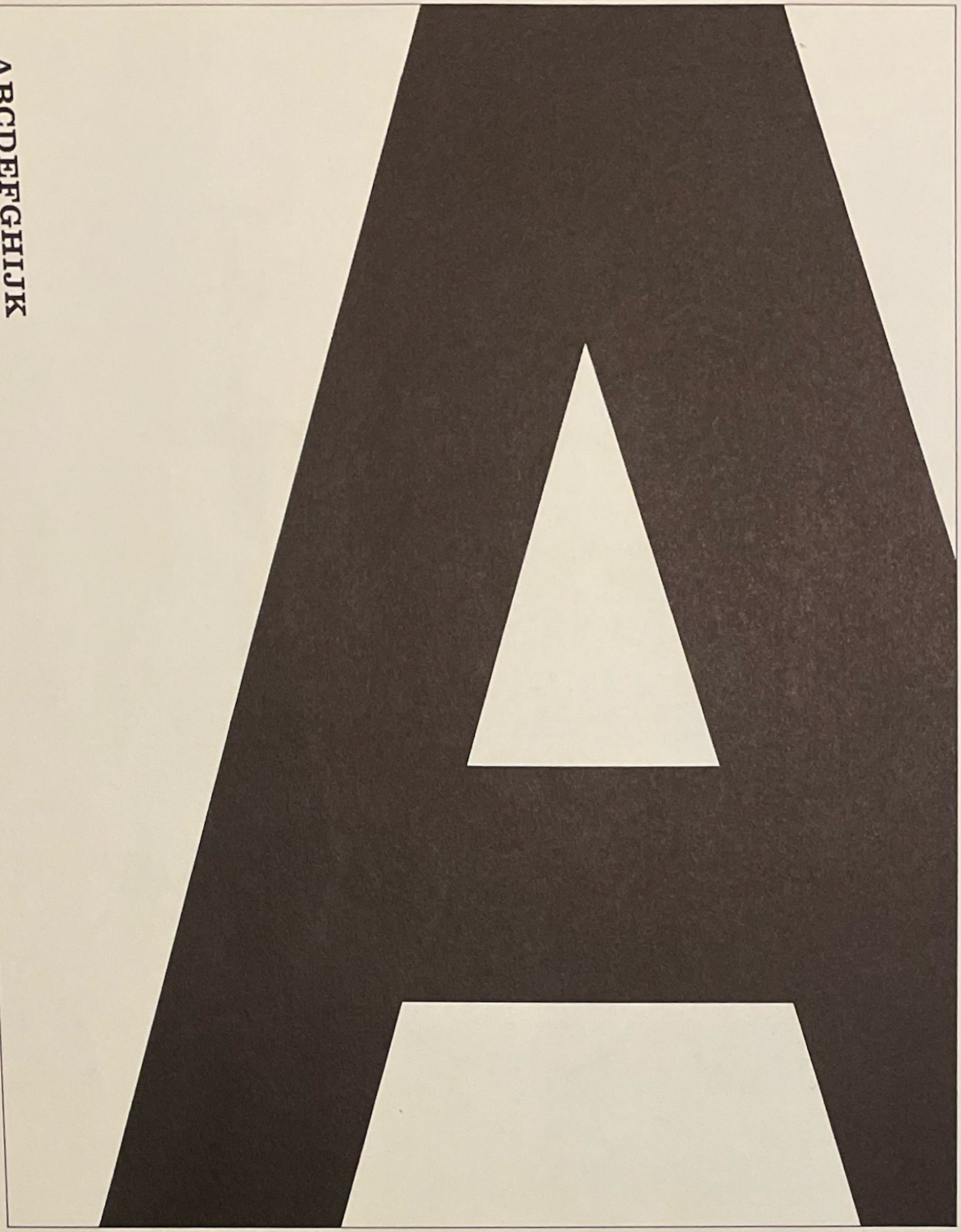
In this contemporary design the same subject — steel construction — is interpreted by a symbol rather than a literal photograph. The layout is reduced to its barest essentials — the copy is confined to a block in the upper right corner and balanced by the trademark or logotype at the lower left. The generous background of white space focuses our attention strongly on the design and the advertiser's brief message.

Courtesy Buffalo Forge Co.

The headline features the power business in this traditional layout. The squared-up photos are realistic views showing the exterior and interior of the power plants. Like the advertisement above, this one fills the layout space completely.



See how the same message of power is expressed in this contemporary layout. Here we have just two major elements. The large stack centered in the middle of the page commands immediate attention — it instantly symbolizes the production of power.



Using type as a major element of design

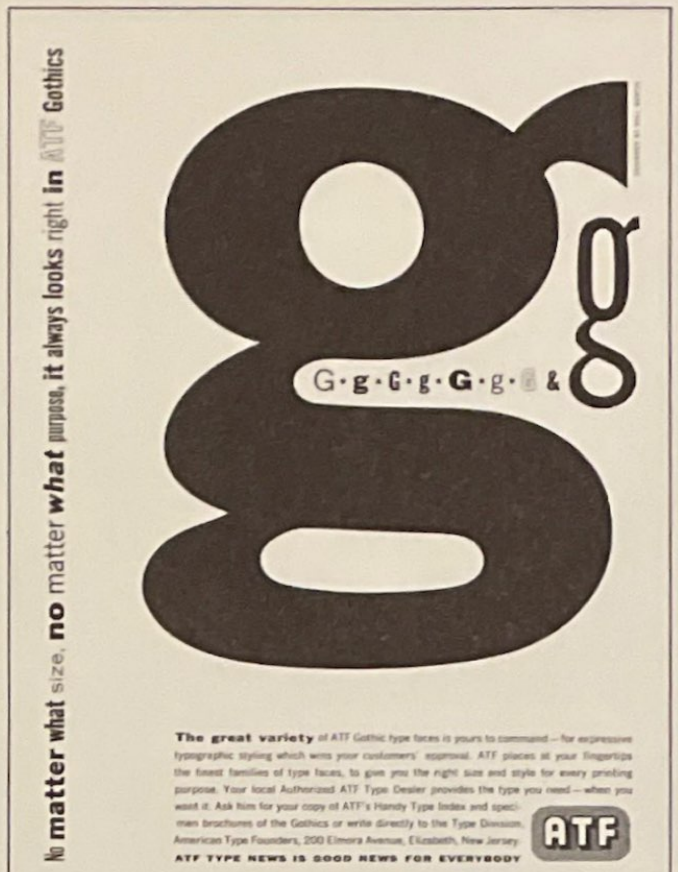
We are all used to seeing type in its familiar role as copy or logotype, as part of a layout. The examples on these two pages show how you can exploit the inherent character of type itself to create effective designs with powerful impact. The fact that each letter form is, in itself, a design of beautiful balance and shape means that single letters and words can both be used by the designer to enhance the layout and convey the written message.

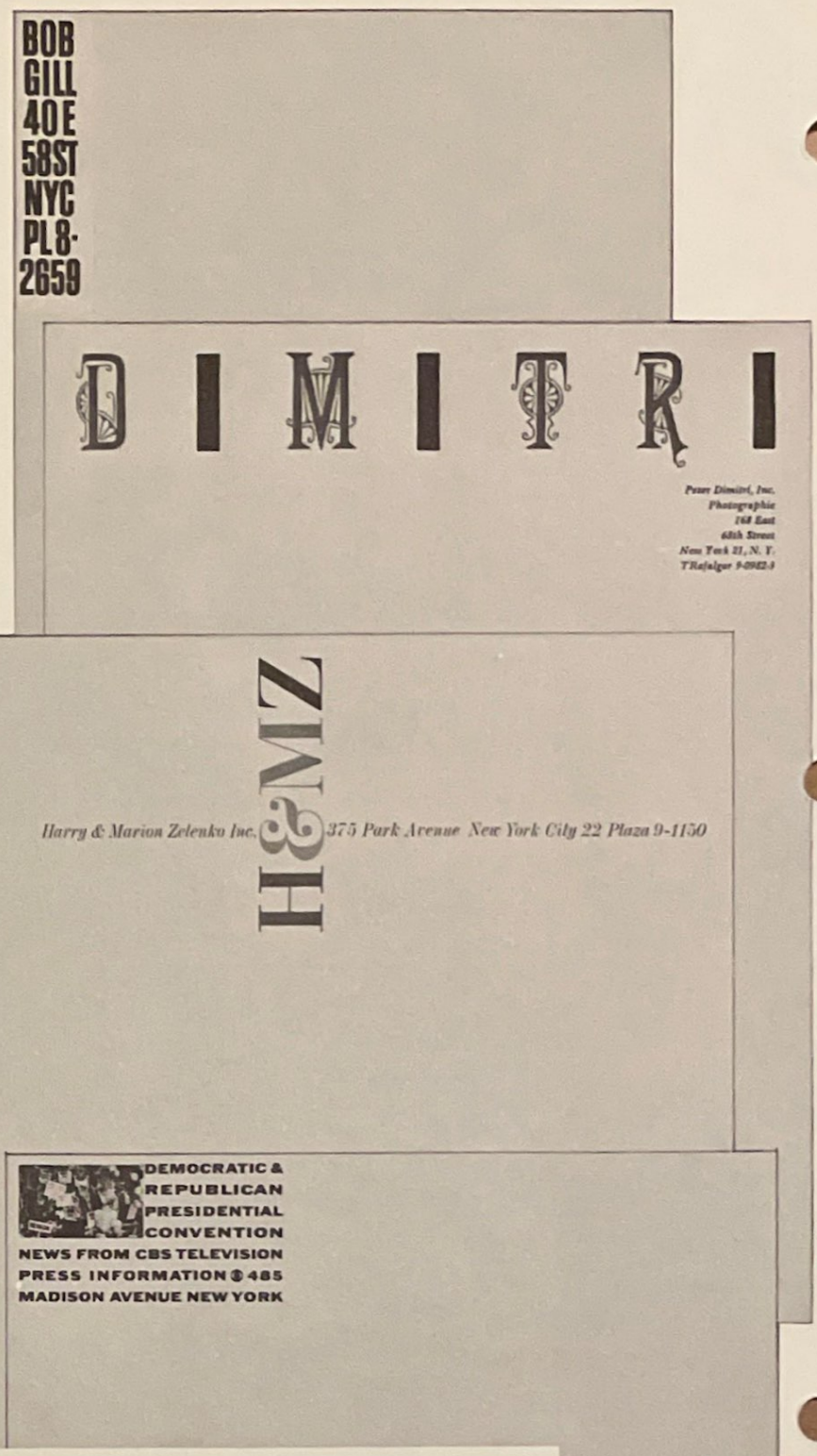
The beauty of well-designed type forms gives you ready-made elements which can be major features of a poster or page layout. For example, here the single letter *A* becomes a poster, one with a real feeling of monumentality. This sense of enormous scale is created by cropping and bleeding the letter at the top, bottom, and side. The design gives the impression that the type is so large that it cannot be contained by the borders of the paper. The contrast of the small type in the upper left corner also makes the *A* seem larger.

Advertising designs created with type

These four advertisements, composed solely of type, were run in a trade magazine. The advertiser is a type founder, and the type is his product – the thing he wants to sell. Arranged in interesting designs, it gets his message across to the special audience of the magazine quickly and effectively. The reader has the product, or the results that can be achieved with it, right in his hand. For a company like this, here is a natural design approach.

The circular form of the letter C provides the basis for this highly original design — which catches the eye and promotes a product at the same time.


No matter what size, no matter what purpose, it always looks right in ATF Gothics
G·g·G·g·G·g·

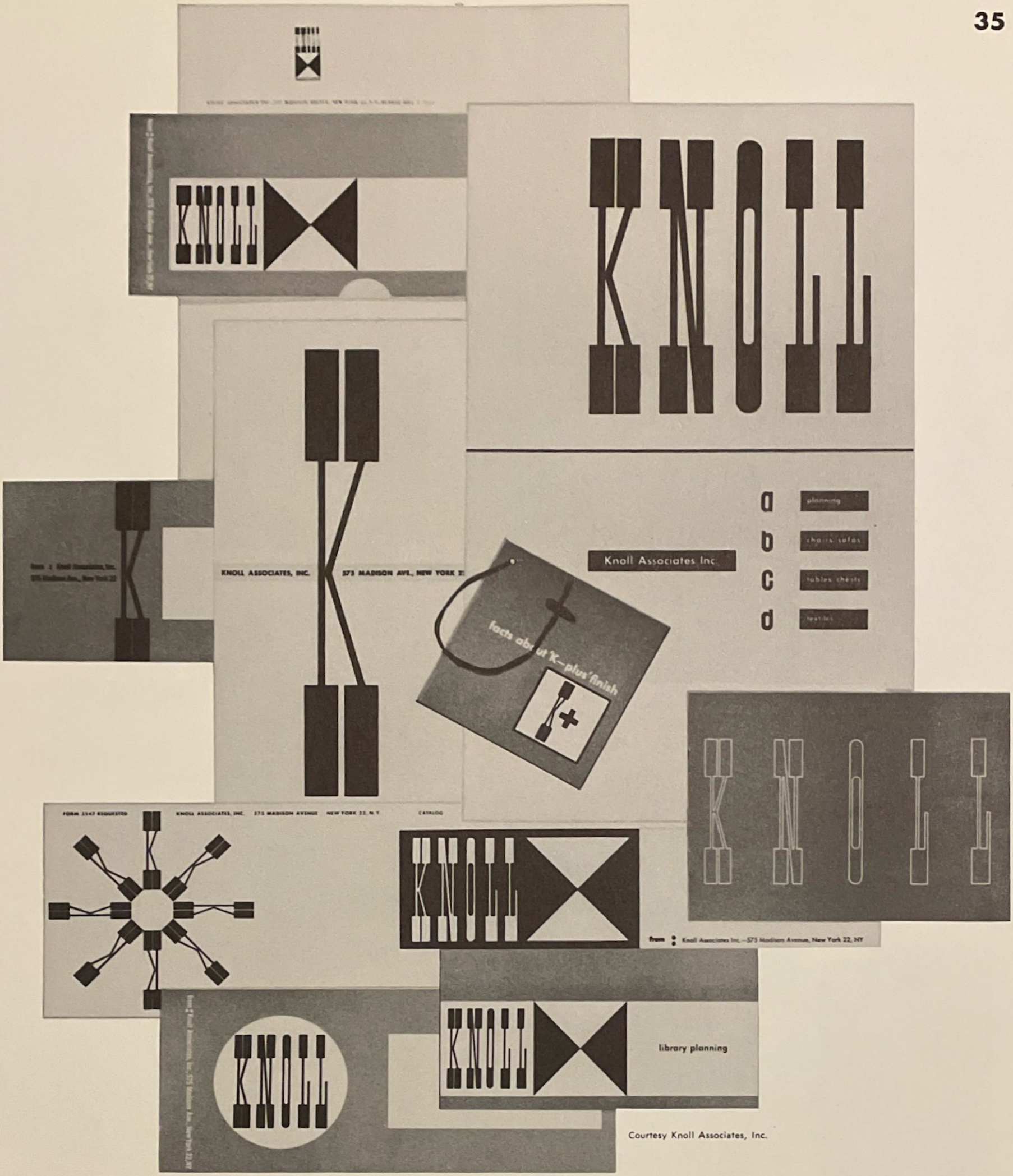


Letterheads

Letterheads, like any other type of design, have a purpose or function. The good ones are always more than just a pleasant piece of decoration at the top of the sheet. They not only identify — they can reflect the taste, character, and type of activity of an individual or an organization.

In the left column, musical instruments and staves form a design that is appropriate for a music scoring and sound effects company, a fashionable Fifth Avenue address is emphasized by a large bold type face, a simple drawing of a cabinet frames the name and address of a cabinet maker, and a TV station becomes part of a network by cleverly using the network symbol in its call letters.

In the right-hand column, a designer with a short name capitalizes on it to create a columnar design, and a photographer conveys his sense of taste and design through his use of an illuminated lettering style. Another unusual design is created by the vertical arrangement of initials across a horizontal row of type. A photo of a parade of delegates sets the tone for news of political conventions. Original effects like these give a letterhead character and distinction.



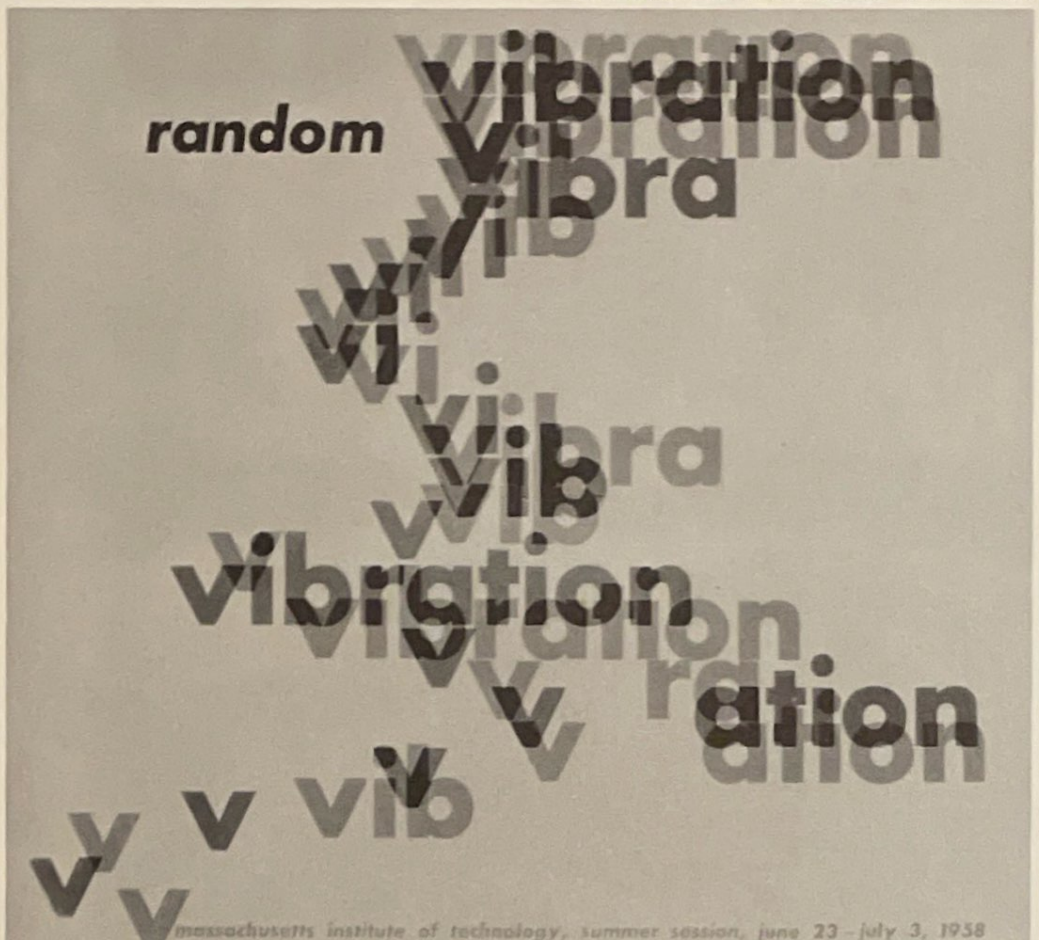
Courtesy Knoll Associates, Inc.

A consistent pattern maintains the corporate image

The designing of company letterheads, booklets, labels, tags, and folders offers you an interesting opportunity that has a challenge all its own. The problem here is to create enough variety to make these pieces interesting – and at the same time maintain a consistent company image through all of them. The designs above show how this can be done effectively. See how the basic logotype – the name "Knoll" – is varied by using the distinctive initial letter *K* in several ways, reversing tones, outlining the letter forms, and combining the name with the double-triangle shape. These examples give you a good idea of the possibilities – of which there are others in endless variety. Modern industry has many jobs of this kind for designers.

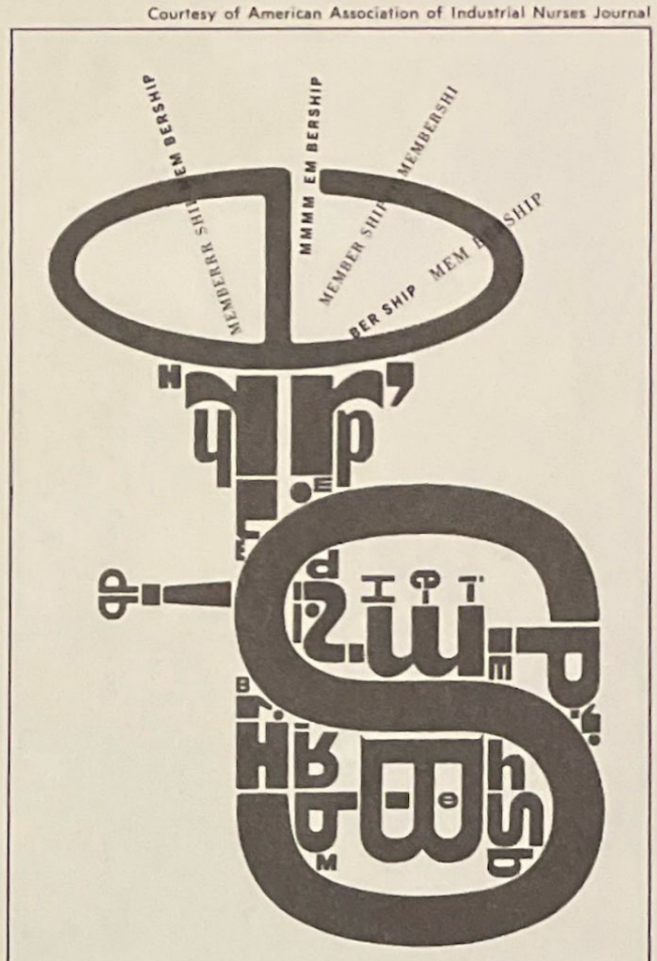
Unusual effects with type

Designed by Ralph Coburn for Mass. Institute of Technology



By overlapping and staggering of the type, this design sets up a convincing sense of vibration on the page.

Courtesy of American Association of Industrial Nurses Journal

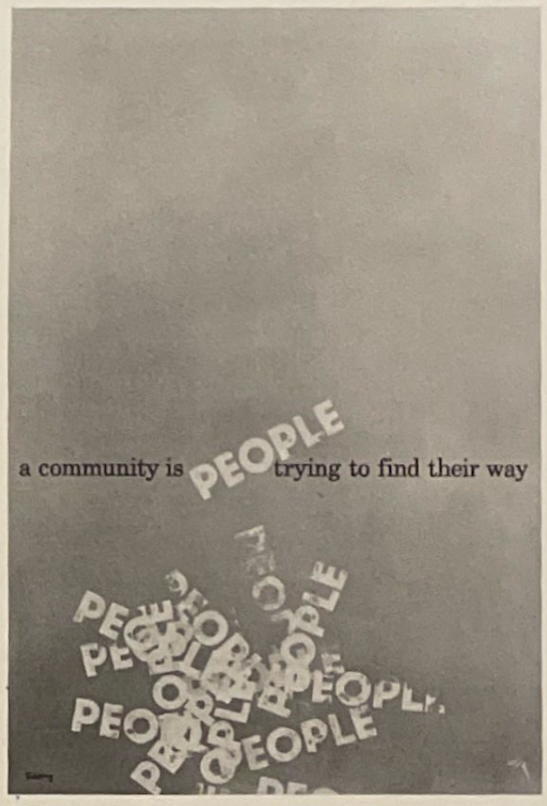


Here is an ingenious drawing of a horn, used to announce a membership drive. It is created entirely with various-sized letters taken from the word "membership," plus punctuation marks.

Courtesy West Virginia Pulp & Paper Co.'s Inspirations No. 210

The left half of this design was reproduced from a photo negative, the right from a positive print. Type lines act as rain.

Family Service Assn. of America



In this poster the key word is repeatedly overprinted as a direct symbol of the tumbled confusion of many people.

Record album covers

The covers of record albums offer an interesting field to the contemporary designer, and many fine artists have found it rewarding. The problem is very similar to that of designing a magazine cover, except that the shape is usually a perfect square.

A great variety of creative approaches are always welcome, so long as they express the subject in a refreshing and original manner. The artist may portray the rhythm or character of the music with abstract shapes and dots of color – he may combine photograph and design – use an old engraving in his layout – create a highly stylized drawing or a droll cartoon – or exercise his ingenuity in countless other ways. The chief requirement of a record album design, next to appropriateness, is that it be striking. It must stand out, so that it catches the viewer's eye and intrigues him – makes him want to hear the record.

Courtesy Tico Records

This cover is designed with lettering alone. The power of repetition is used to convey the repetitive quality of Cuban music. The impressive pattern almost makes you hear the insistent rhythm.

Courtesy Columbia Records

There's a poster-like simplicity combined with sensitive drawing in this album cover showing the blues singer rushing between important cities of the Jazz Belt.

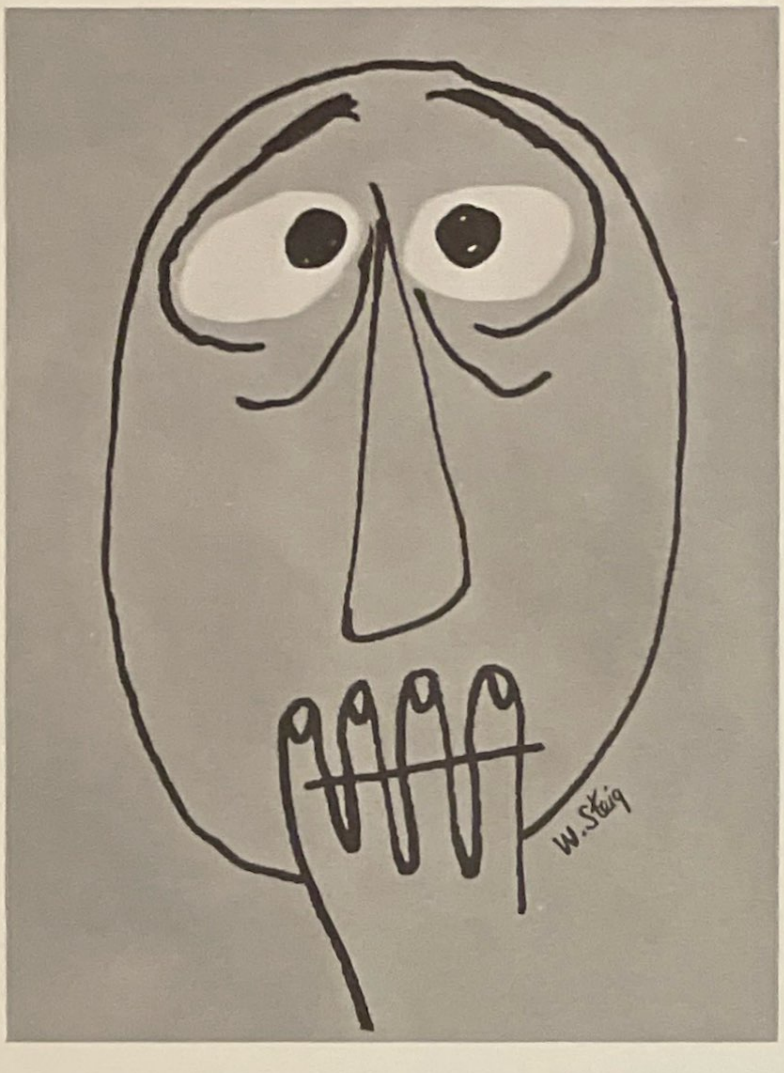
Courtesy Mercury Record Corp.

The simple thin flowing lines at the top suggest musical rhythms, and the hands carry out the wizardry featured in the title.

© 1956 by Contemporary Records

This simple but striking design shows wonderful humor as these silly-looking birds tap their feet in time to the music.

Courtesy National Broadcasting Co.



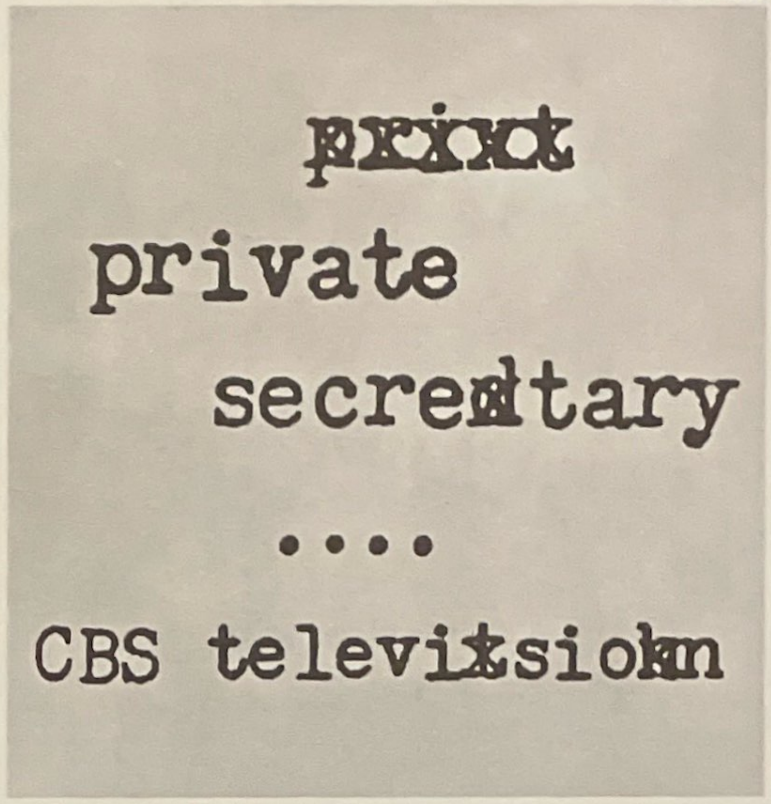
in the dark about daytime television?

This is an NBC television mailing piece. Certainly it is a simple, humorous drawing that matches the headline perfectly.

Blending words and pictures

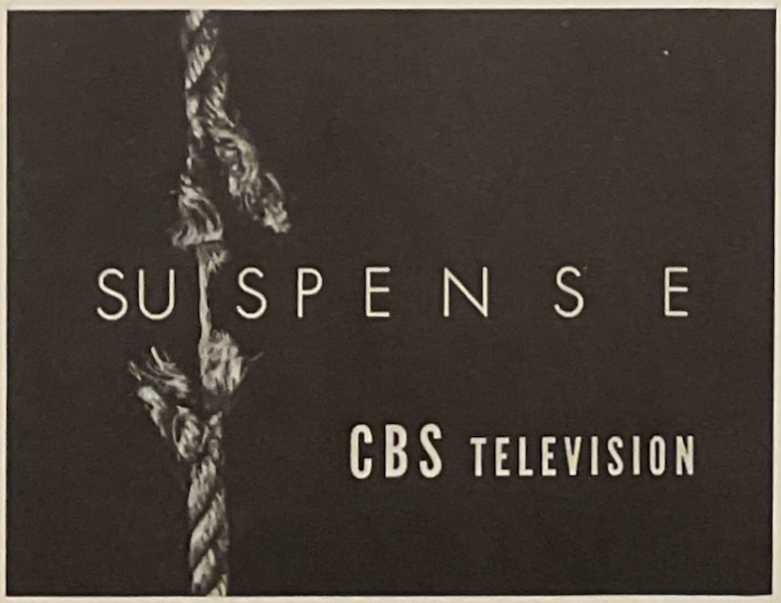
The words in an advertisement or any other form of visual communication may be few but they are important. If the picture interprets the words correctly – with humor or drama – the idea will communicate immediately and be successful. Notice, in these examples, that there are no distractions, no unnecessary details. Each illustration expresses the idea with great simplicity.

Courtesy CBS-TV



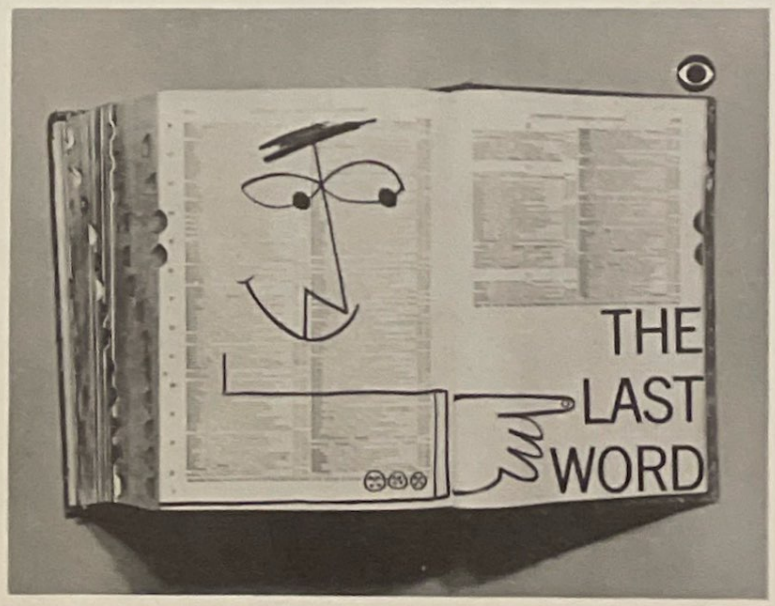
In this amusing TV title the type itself is the illustration and the errors suggest the comedy as well as the subject of the program.

Courtesy CBS-TV



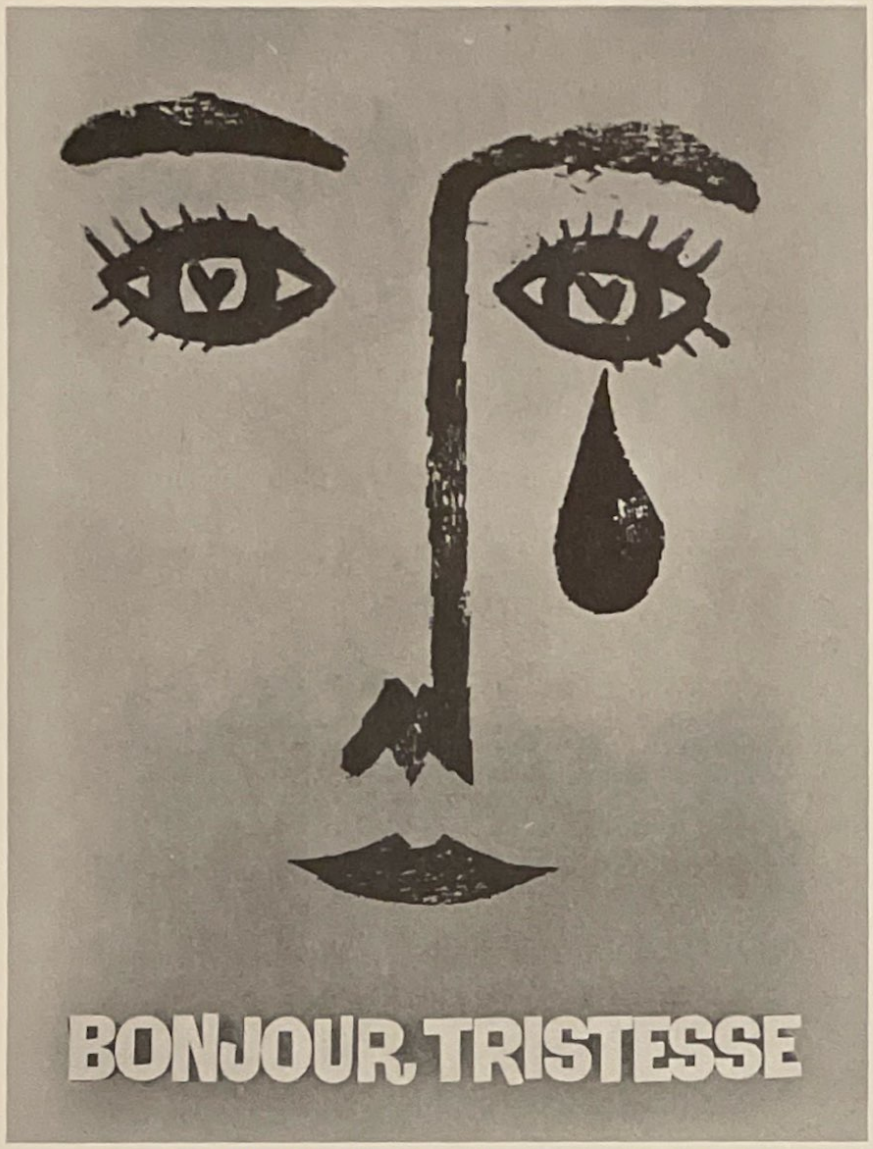
Suspense is visually stated by the frayed rope, held together by a few taut strands. It symbolizes the subject perfectly.

Courtesy CBS-TV



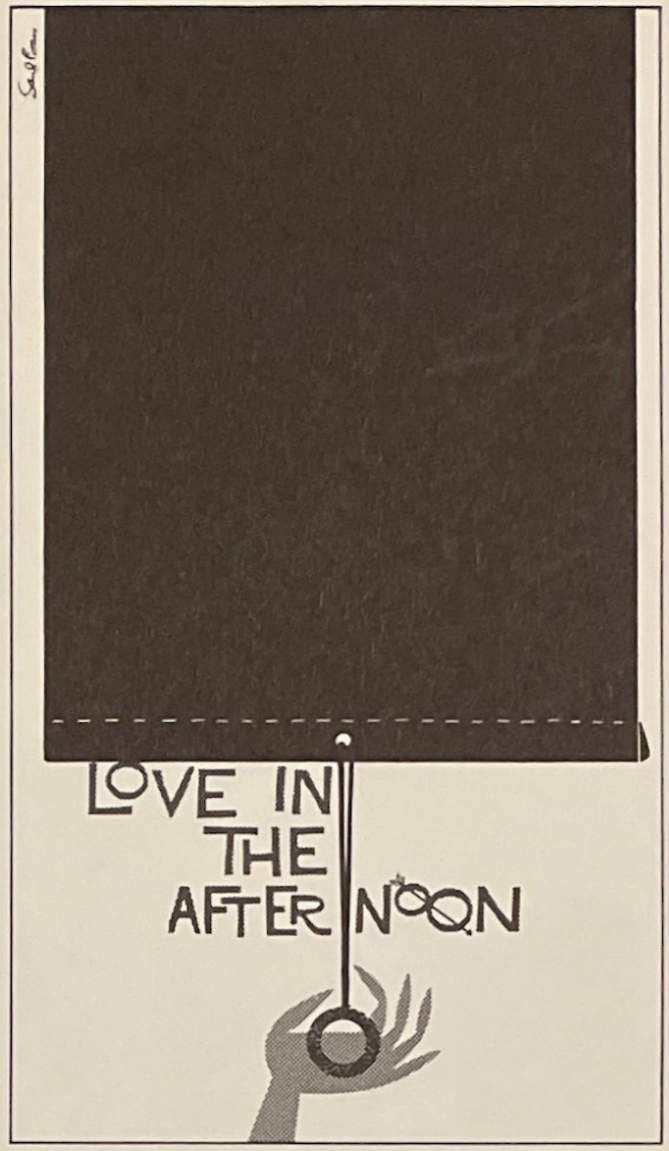
It is a clever idea to relate the program title to the last page of a dictionary – the symbol of knowledge and authority.

Courtesy Saul Bass, Lester Rossin Associates



An advertisement for the United Artists film *Bonjour Tristesse*. It combines humor and wistfulness.

Courtesy Saul Bass, Lester Rossin Associates

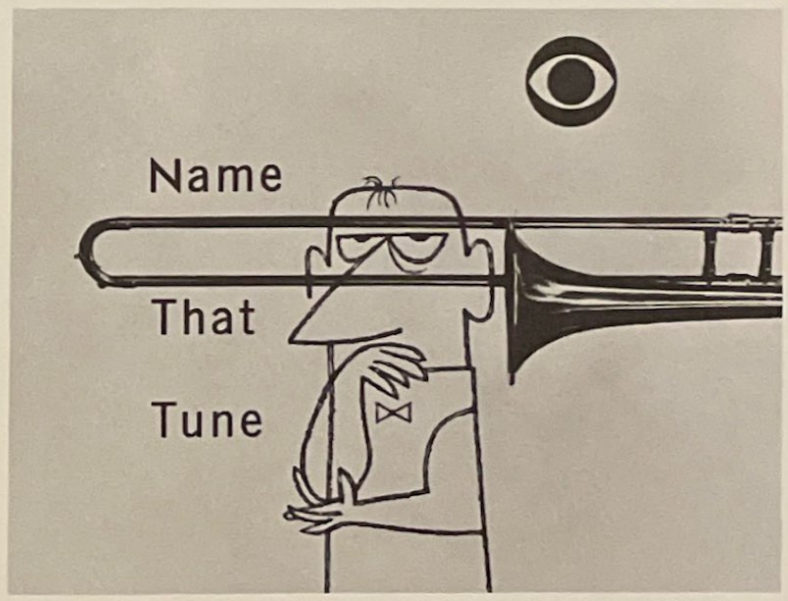


An Allied Artists Corporation ad for a movie — gay and definitely risqué.

Courtesy CBS

The title for the TV program "I've Got a Secret." The combination of the realistic zipper and the cartoon gets the idea across quickly and amusingly.

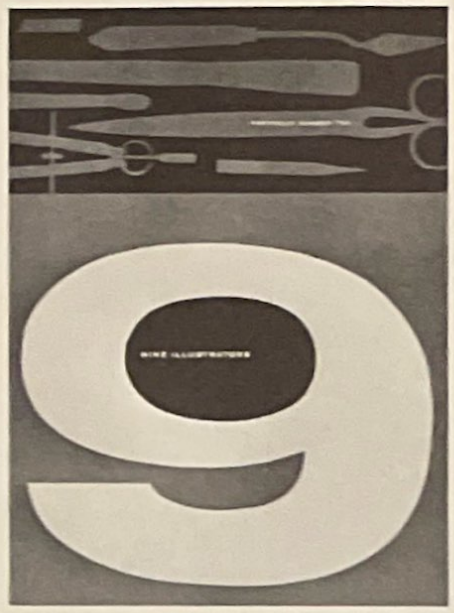
Courtesy CBS Radio



An imaginative and humorous interpretation of another television program title. The design is simple, well balanced and immediately effective.

Courtesy CBS Radio

Graphis Press

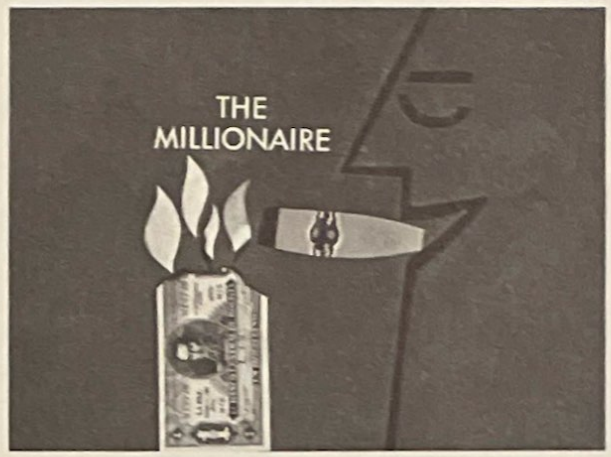


Remember — it's the subject that counts

Each one of these examples expresses its subject perfectly. Each one is effective because it spells out the key idea strongly and directly through the design. No matter how simple, the design never moves away from the subject. At the same time nothing is overdone. There is even restraint in the suggestion of romance symbolized by the heart-shaped typewriter key for the last letter of "Secretary" . . . and using a dog's bone for just one letter of the name "Lassie" is enough to identify the program's star clearly and amusingly.

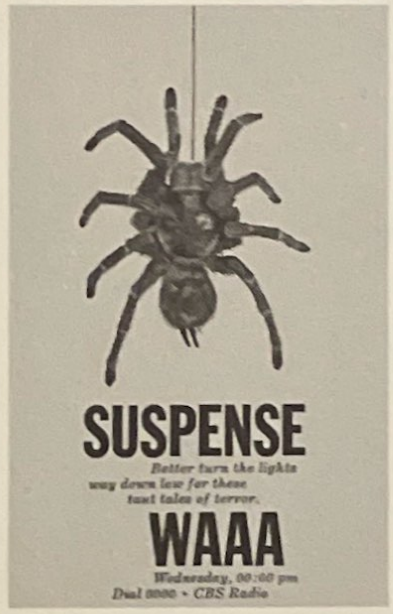
Courtesy CBS-TV

Courtesy Canadian Broadcasting Corp.



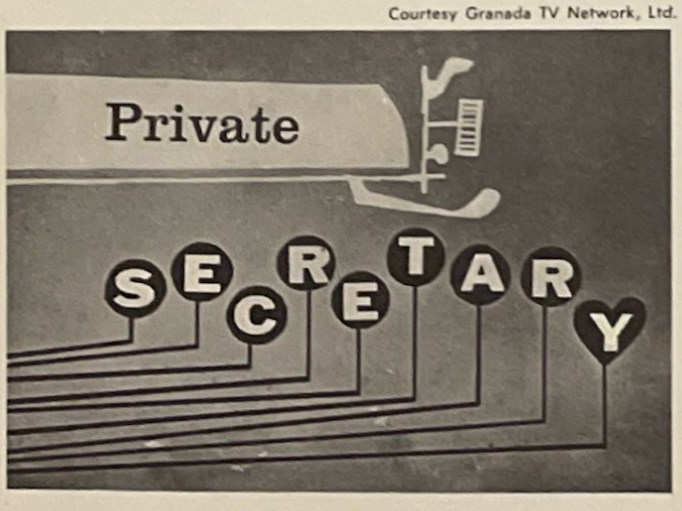
Courtesy Saul Bass, Lester Rossin Associates

Courtesy CBS Radio

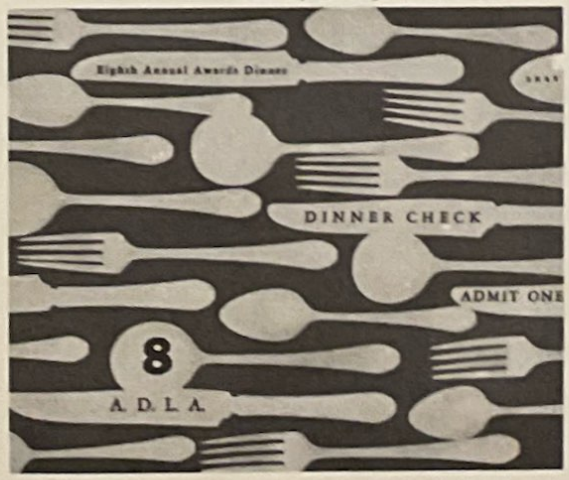


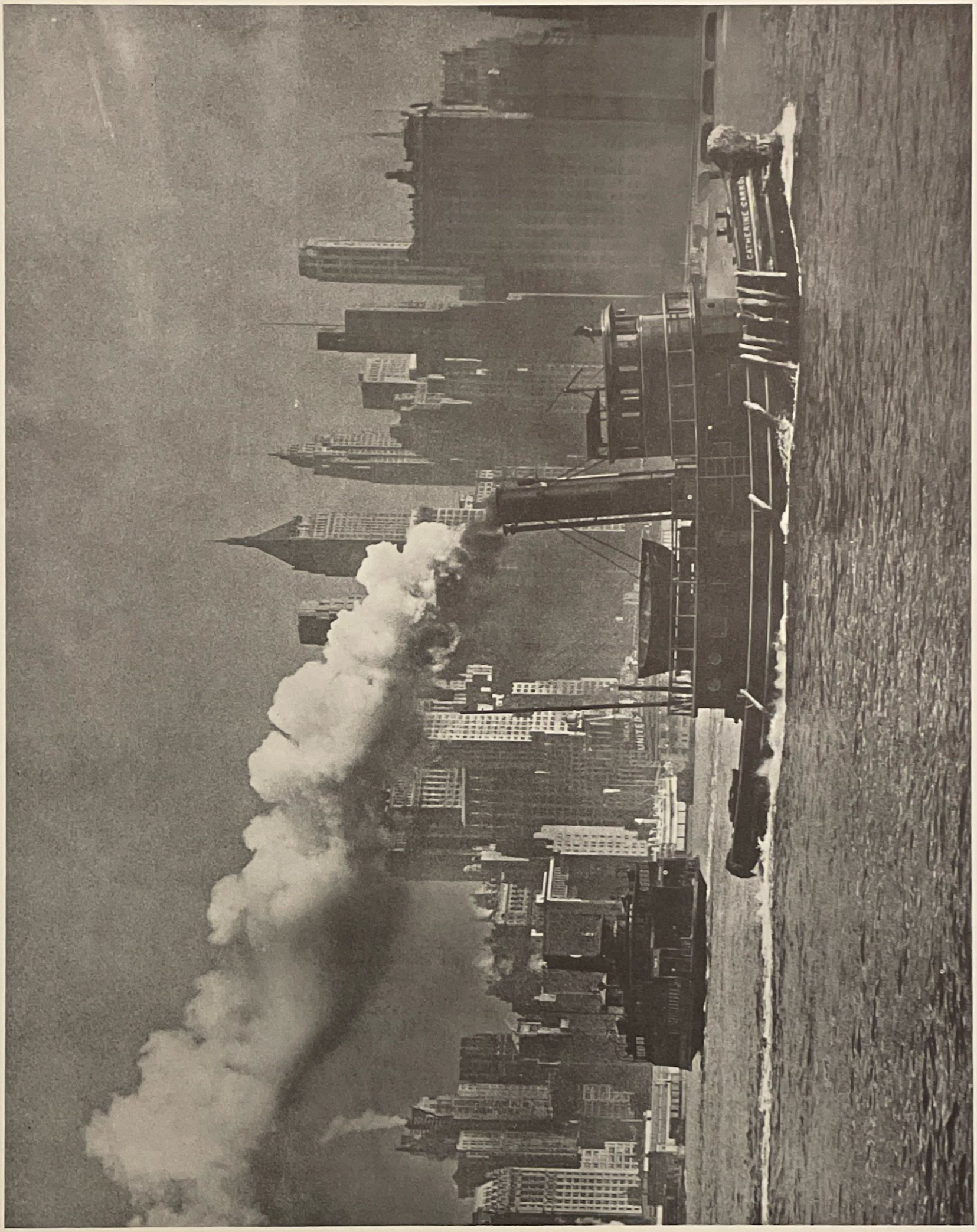
Courtesy General Dynamics Corp.

Courtesy Granada TV Network, Ltd.



Courtesy Los Angeles Art Directors Club




CATHERINE CARR
UNITED

FAMOUS ARTISTS COURSE
Student work
Lesson 19
Advertising and editorial design and layout

HOW TO PRACTICE AND PREPARE FOR THIS LESSON

In this lesson we demonstrate how to simplify realistic and complicated pictures into strong, symbolic designs. Apply what you learn from these demonstrations to your own designs -- those done for practice as well as those you submit for criticism.

Follow these suggestions to get full benefit from your study and practice for this lesson:

1. Select photographs of any subjects that interest you and see what you can do to reduce them to simple but effective designs.

2. Create designs similar to those shown on pages 18, 19, 21 and 22. Set yourself the problem of communicating certain effects or subjects through a simple but, at the same time, forceful and interesting design.

3. Design pure symbols such as those on pages 24 and 25. Choose a variety of subjects -- a tree, factory, farm, steamship -- anything that stimulates your visual imagination. Work from real objects or photos in magazines or newspapers.

4. Select a number of ads with traditional layouts and create a contemporary version of these ads. Aim for a bold, direct quality of design such as you see in the contemporary examples on pages 30 and 31. Keep working toward greater and greater simplification and impact without losing the all-important quality of recognition.

THE ASSIGNMENTS YOU ARE TO SEND IN FOR CRITICISM

ASSIGNMENT 1. Make four designs which express visually any four of the following holidays. Be sure you create a design, not an illustration.

New Year's
Arbor Day
4th of July
Labor Day
Halloween
Thanksgiving

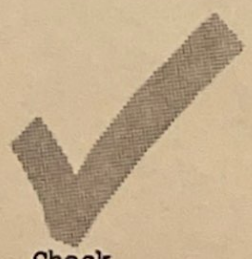
Work in any medium you wish using black and any two additional colors. The designs are to measure 4 x 5 inches. Do them on a sheet of 11 x 14-inch paper and be sure to label each design.

Mark this sheet -- ASSIGNMENT 1.

ASSIGNMENT 2. Make a simplified design based on the photograph of New York Harbor on Plate 1. Before you begin, restudy pages 8 through 15, which demonstrate the principles of simplification in design. Do this assignment in color, using either transparent or opaque water color. Remember this is to be treated as a design, not a realistic illustration. Make your design 9 inches high by 12 inches wide on a piece of 11 x 14-inch illustration board.

Mark this design -- ASSIGNMENT 2.

In criticizing your work, our chief concern will be how well you can interpret words or ideas by means of clear, forceful designs.



Check
before mailing

IMPORTANT: Be sure to letter your name, address and student number neatly at the lower left-hand corner of each assignment. In the lower right corner, place the lesson number and assignment number.

Your lesson carton should contain:

Assignment 1
Assignment 2
1 Return shipping label filled out completely

Mail this carton to:
FAMOUS ARTISTS COURSE, WESTPORT, CONN.